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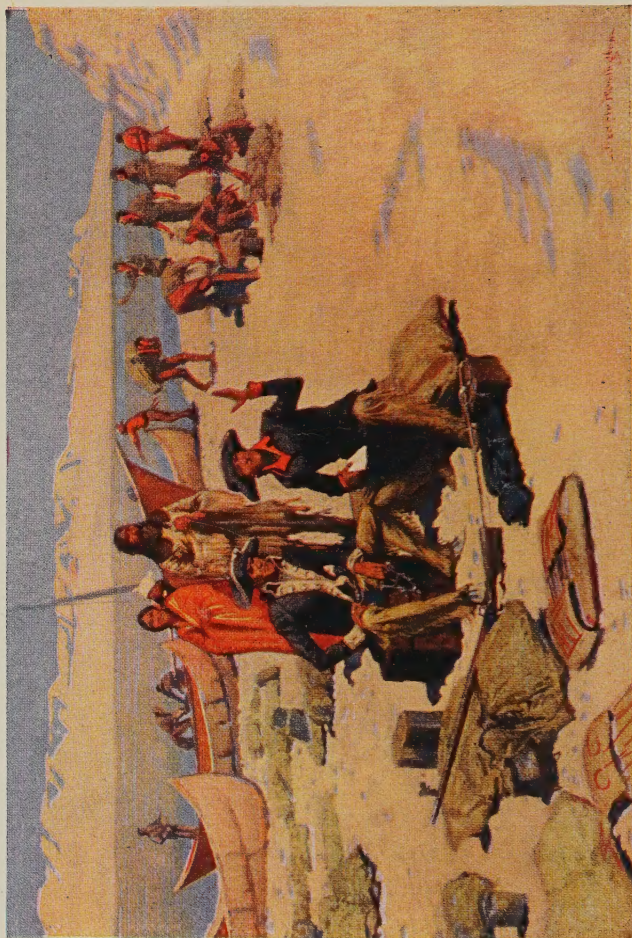
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LEWIS AND CLARK ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER

From the painting by Frederic Remington

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PIONEERS OF THE NORTHWEST

PART 1: THE OLD NORTHWEST

BY FREDERIC AUSTIN OGG

PART 2: ADVENTURERS OF OREGON

BY CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER



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PART I
THE OLD NORTHWEST
A CHRONICLE
OF THE OHIO VALLEY AND BEYOND
BY
FREDERIC AUSTIN OGG

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CONTENTS

I. PONTIAC'S CONSPIRACY	Page 1
II. "A LAIR OF WILD BEASTS"	" 20
III. THE REVOLUTION BEGINS	" 41
IV. THE CONQUEST COMPLETED	" 57
V. WAYNE, THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIANS	" 76
VI. THE GREAT MIGRATION	" 97
VII. PIONEER DAYS AND WAYS	" 110
VIII. TECUMSEH	" 131
IX. THE WAR OF 1812 AND THE NEW WEST	" 151
X. SECTIONAL CROSS CURRENTS	" 172
XI. THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY	" 189
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	" 211
INDEX	" 215

THE OLD NORTHWEST

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CHAPTER I

PONTIAC'S CONSPIRACY

THE fall of Montreal, on September 8, 1760, while the plains about the city were still dotted with the white tents of the victorious English and colonial troops, was indeed an event of the deepest consequence to America and to the world. By the articles of capitulation which were signed by the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor of New France, Canada and all its dependencies westward to the Mississippi passed to the British Crown. Virtually ended was the long struggle for the dominion of the New World. Open now for English occupation and settlement was that vast country lying south of the Great Lakes between the Ohio and the Mississippi — which we know as the Old Northwest —

today the seat of five great commonwealths of the United States.

With an ingenuity born of necessity, the French pathfinders and colonizers of the Old Northwest had chosen for their settlements sites which would serve at once the purposes of the priest, the trader, and the soldier; and with scarcely an exception these sites are as important today as when they were first selected. Four regions, chiefly, were still occupied by the French at the time of the capitulation of Montreal. The most important, as well as the most distant, of these regions was on the east bank of the Mississippi, opposite and below the present city of St. Louis, where a cluster of missions, forts, and trading-posts held the center of the tenuous line extending from Canada to Louisiana. A second was the Illinois country, centering about the citadel of St. Louis which La Salle had erected in 1682 on the summit of "Starved Rock," near the modern town of Ottawa in Illinois. A third was the valley of the Wabash, where in the early years of the eighteenth century Vincennes had become the seat of a colony commanding both the Wabash and the lower Ohio. And the fourth was the western end of Lake Erie, where Detroit, founded by the doughty Cadillac in 1701, had as-

sumed such strength that for fifty years it had discouraged the ambitions of the English to make the Northwest theirs.

Sir Jeffrey Amherst, to whom Vaudreuil surrendered in 1760, forthwith dispatched to the western country a military force to take possession of the posts still remaining in the hands of the French. The mission was entrusted to a stalwart New Hampshire Scotch-Irishman, Major Robert Rogers, who as leader of a band of intrepid "rangers" had made himself the hero of the northern frontier. Two hundred men were chosen for the undertaking, and on the 13th of September the party, in fifteen whaleboats, started up the St. Lawrence for Detroit.

At the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, near the site of the present city of Cleveland, the travelers were halted by a band of Indian chiefs and warriors who, in the name of their great ruler Pontiac, demanded to know the object of their journeying. Parleys followed, in which Pontiac himself took part, and it was explained that the French had surrendered Canada to the English and that the English merely proposed to assume control of the western posts, with a view to friendly relations between the red men and the white men. The rivers,

it was promised, would flow with rum, and presents from the great King would be forthcoming in endless profusion. The explanation seemed to satisfy the savages, and, after smoking the calumet with due ceremony, the chieftain and his followers withdrew.

Late in November, Rogers and his men in their whaleboats appeared before the little palisaded town of Detroit. They found the French commander, Belêtre, in surly humor and seeking to stir up the neighboring Wyandots and Potawatomi against them. But the attempt failed, and there was nothing for Belêtre to do but yield. The French soldiery marched out of the fort, laid down their arms, and were sent off as prisoners down the river. The fleur-de-lis, which for more than half a century had floated over the village, was hauled down, and, to the accompaniment of cheers, the British ensign was run up. The red men looked on with amazement at this display of English authority and marveled how the conquerors forbore to slay their vanquished enemies on the spot.

Detroit in 1760 was a picturesque, lively, and rapidly growing frontier town. The central portions of the settlement, lying within the bounds of the present city, contained ninety or a hundred

small houses, chiefly of wood and roofed with bark or thatch. A well-built range of barracks afforded quarters for the soldiery, and there were two public buildings—a council house and a little church. The whole was surrounded by a square palisade twenty-five feet high, with a wooden bastion at each corner and a blockhouse over each gateway. A broad passageway, the *chemin du ronde*, lay next to the palisade, and on little narrow streets at the center the houses were grouped closely together.

Above and below the fort the banks of the river were lined on both sides, for a distance of eight or nine miles, with little rectangular farms, so laid out as to give each a water-landing. On each farm was a cottage, with a garden and orchard, surrounded by a fence of rounded pickets; and the countryside rang with the shouts and laughter of a prosperous and happy peasantry. Within the limits of the settlement were villages of Ottawas, Potawatomi, and Wyandots, with whose inhabitants the French lived on free and easy terms. “The joyous sparkling of the bright blue water,” writes Parkman; “the green luxuriance of the woods; the white dwellings, looking out from the foliage; and in the distance the Indian wigwams curling their smoke

against the sky—all were mingled in one broad scene of wild and rural beauty.”

At the coming of the English the French residents were given an opportunity to withdraw. Few, however, did so, and from the gossipy correspondence of the pleasure-loving Colonel Campbell, who for some months was left in command of the fort, it appears that the life of the place lost none of its gayety by the change of masters. Sunday card parties at the quarters of the commandant were festive affairs; and at a ball held in celebration of the King's birthday the ladies presented an appearance so splendid as to call forth from the impressionable officer the most extravagant praises. A visit in the summer of 1761 from Sir William Johnson, general supervisor of Indian affairs on the frontier, became the greatest social event in the history of the settlement, if not of the entire West. Colonel Campbell gave a ball at which the guests danced nine hours. Sir William reciprocated with one at which they danced eleven hours. A round of dinners and calls gave opportunity for much display of frontier magnificence, as well as for the consumption of astonishing quantities of wines and cordials. Hundreds of Indians were interested spectators, and the gifts with which they were gen-

erously showered were received with evidences of deep satisfaction.

No amount of fiddling and dancing, however, could quite drown apprehension concerning the safety of the post and the security of the English hold upon the great region over which this fort and its distant neighbors stood sentinel. Thousands of square miles of territory were committed to the keeping of not more than six hundred soldiers. From the French there was little danger. But from the Indians anything might be expected. Apart from the Iroquois, the red men had been bound to the French by many ties of friendship and common interest, and in the late war they had scalped and slaughtered and burned unhesitatingly at the French command. Hardly, indeed, had the transfer of territorial sovereignty been made before murmurs of discontent began to be heard.

Notwithstanding outward expressions of assent to the new order of things, a deep-rooted dislike on the part of the Indians for the English grew after 1760 with great rapidity. They sorely missed the gifts and supplies lavishly provided by the French, and they warmly resented the rapacity and arrogance of the British traders. The open contempt of the soldiery at the posts galled the

Indians, and the confiscation of their lands drove them to desperation. In their hearts hope never died that the French would regain their lost dominion; and again and again rumors were set afloat that this was about to happen. The belief in such a reconquest was adroitly encouraged, too, by the surviving French settlers and traders. In 1761 the tension among the Indians was increased by the appearance of a "prophet" among the Delawares, calling on all his race to purge itself of foreign influences and to unite to drive the white man from the land.

Protests against English encroachments were frequent and, though respectful, none the less emphatic. At a conference in Philadelphia in 1761, an Iroquois sachem declared, "We, your Brethren, of the several Nations, are penned up like Hogs. There are Forts all around us, and therefore we are apprehensive that Death is coming upon us." "We are now left in Peace," ran a petition of some Christian Oneidas addressed to Sir William Johnson, "and have nothing to do but to plant our Corn, Hunt the wild Beasts, smoke our Pipes, and mind Religion. But as these Forts, which are built among us, disturb our Peace, and are a great hurt to Religion, because some of our Warriors are

foolish, and some of our Brother Soldiers don't fear God, we therefore desire that these Forts may be pull'd down, and kick'd out of the way."

The leadership of the great revolt that was impending fell naturally upon Pontiac, who, since the coming of the English, had established himself with his squaws and children on a wooded island in Lake St. Clair, barely out of view of the fortifications of Detroit. In all Indian annals no name is more illustrious than Pontiac's; no figure more forcefully displays the good and bad qualities of his race. Principal chief of the Ottawa tribe, he was also by 1763 the head of a powerful confederation of Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomi, and a leader known and respected among Algonquin peoples from the sources of the Ohio to the Mississippi. While capable of acts of magnanimity, he had an ambition of Napoleonic proportions, and to attain his ends he was prepared to use any means. More clearly than most of his forest contemporaries, he perceived that in the life of the Indian people a crisis had come. He saw that, unless the tide of English invasion was rolled back at once, all would be lost. The colonial farmers would push in after the soldiers; the forests would be cut away; the hunting-grounds would be destroyed;

the native population would be driven away or enslaved. In the silence of his wigwam he thought out a plan of action, and by the closing weeks of 1762 he was ready. Never was plot more shrewdly devised and more artfully carried out.

During the winter of 1762-63 his messengers passed stealthily from nation to nation throughout the whole western country, bearing the pictured wampum belts and the reddened tomahawks which symbolized war; and in April, 1763, the Lake tribes were summoned to a great council on the banks of the Ecorces, below Detroit, where Pontiac in person proclaimed the will of the Master of Life as revealed to the Delaware prophet, and then announced the details of his plan. Everywhere the appeal met with approval; and not only the scores of Algonquin peoples, but also the Seneca branch of the Iroquois confederacy and a number of tribes on the lower Mississippi, pledged themselves with all solemnity to fulfill their prophet's injunction "to drive the dogs which wear red clothing into the sea." While keen-eyed warriors sought to keep up appearances by lounging about the forts and begging in their customary manner for tobacco, whiskey, and gunpowder, every wigwam and forest hamlet from Niagara to the Missis-

issippi was astir. Dusky maidens chanted the tribal war-songs, and in the blaze of a hundred camp-fires chiefs and warriors performed the savage pantomime of battle.

A simultaneous attack, timed by a change of the moon, was to be made on the English forts and settlements throughout all the western country. Every tribe was to fall upon the settlement nearest at hand, and afterwards all were to combine — with French aid, it was confidently believed — in an assault on the seats of English power farther east. The honor of destroying the most important of the English strongholds, Detroit, was reserved for Pontiac himself.

The date fixed for the rising was the 7th of May. Six days in advance Pontiac with forty of his warriors appeared at the fort, protested undying friendship for the Great Father across the water, and insisted on performing the calumet dance before the new commandant, Major Gladwyn. This aroused no suspicion. But four days later a French settler reported that his wife, when visiting the Ottawa village to buy venison, had observed the men busily filing off the ends of their gun-barrels; and the blacksmith at the post recalled the fact that the Indians had lately sought to

borrow files and saws without being able to give a plausible explanation of the use they intended to make of the implements.

The English traveler Jonathan Carver, who visited the post five years afterwards, relates that an Ottawa girl with whom Major Gladwyn had formed an attachment betrayed the plot. Though this story is of doubtful authenticity, there is no doubt that, in one way or another, the commandant was amply warned that treachery was in the air. The sounds of revelry from the Indian camps, the furtive glances of the redskins lounging about the settlement, the very tension of the atmosphere, would have been enough to put an experienced Indian fighter on his guard.

Accordingly when, on the fated morning, Pontiac and sixty redskins, carrying under long blankets their shortened muskets, appeared before the fort and asked admission, they were taken aback to find the whole garrison under arms. On their way from the gate to the council house they were obliged to march literally between rows of glittering steel. Well might even Pontiac falter. With uneasy glances, the party crowded into the council room, where Gladwyn and his officers sat waiting. "Why," asked the chieftain stolidly, "do I see so

many of my father's young men standing in the street with their guns?" "To keep them in training," was the laconic reply.

The scene that was planned was then carried out, except in one vital particular. When, in the course of his speech professing strong attachment to the English, the chieftain came to the point where he was to give the signal for slaughter by holding forth the wampum belt of peace inverted, he presented the emblem — to the accompaniment of a significant clash of arms and roll of drums from the mustered garrison outside — in the normal manner; and after a solemn warning from the commandant that vengeance would follow any act of aggression, the council broke up. To the forest leader's equivocal announcement that he would bring all of his wives and children in a few days to shake hands with their English fathers, Gladwyn deigned no reply.

Balked in his plans, the chief retired, but only to meditate fresh treachery; and when, a few days later, with a multitude of followers, he sought admission to the fort to assure "his fathers" that "evil birds had sung lies in their ears," and was refused, he called all his forces to arms, threw off his disguises, and began hostilities. For six months

the settlement was besieged with a persistence rarely displayed in Indian warfare. At first the French inhabitants encouraged the besiegers, but, after it became known that a final peace between England and France had been concluded, they withheld further aid. Throughout the whole period, the English obtained supplies with no great difficulty from the neighboring farms. There was little actual fighting, and the loss of life was insignificant.

By order of General Amherst, the French commander still in charge of Fort Chartres sent a messenger to inform the redskins definitely that no assistance from France would be forthcoming. "Forget then, my dear children," — so ran the admonition — "all evil talks. Leave off from spilling the blood of your brethren, the English. Our hearts are now but one; you cannot, at present, strike the one without having the other for an enemy also." The effect was, as intended, to break the spirit of the besiegers; and in October Pontiac humbly sued for peace.

Meanwhile a reign of terror spread over the entire frontier. Settlements from Forts Le Bœuf and Venango, south of Lake Erie, to Green Bay, west of Lake Michigan, were attacked, and ruses

similar to that attempted at Detroit were generally successful. A few Indians in friendly guise would approach a fort. After these were admitted, others would appear, as if quite by chance. Finally, when numbers were sufficient, the conspirators would draw their concealed weapons, strike down the garrison, and begin a general massacre of the helpless populace. Scores of pioneer families, scattered through the wilderness, were murdered and scalped; traders were waylaid in the forest solitudes; border towns were burned and plantations were devastated. In the Ohio Valley everything was lost except Fort Pitt, formerly Fort Duquesne; in the Northwest, everything was taken except Detroit.

Fort Pitt was repeatedly endangered, and the most important engagement of the war was fought in its defense. The relief of the post was entrusted in midsummer to a force of five hundred regulars lately transferred from the West Indies to Pennsylvania and placed under the command of Colonel Henry Bouquet. The expedition advanced with all possible caution, but early in August, 1763, when it was yet twenty-five miles from its destination, it was set upon by a formidable Indian band at Bushy Run and threatened with a fate not un-

like that suffered by Braddock's little army in the same region nine years earlier. Finding the woods full of redskins and all retreat cut off, the troops, drawn up in a circle around their horses and supplies, fired with such effect as they could upon the shadowy forms in the forest. No water was obtainable, and in a few hours thirst began to make the soldiery unmanageable. Realizing that the situation was desperate, Bouquet resorted to a ruse by ordering his men to fall back as if in retreat. The trick succeeded, and with yells of victory the Indians rushed from cover to seize the coveted provisions — only to be met by a deadly fire and put to utter rout. The news of the battle of Bushy Run spread rapidly through the frontier regions and proved very effective in discouraging further hostilities.

It was Bouquet's intention to press forward at once from Fort Pitt into the disturbed Ohio country. His losses, however, compelled the postponement of this part of the undertaking until the following year. Before he started off again he built at Fort Pitt a blockhouse which still stands, and which has been preserved for posterity by becoming, in 1894, the property of the Pittsburgh chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In

October, 1764, he set out for the Muskingum valley with a force of fifteen hundred regulars, Pennsylvania and Virginia volunteers, and friendly Indians. By this time the great conspiracy was in collapse, and it was a matter of no great difficulty for Bouquet to enter into friendly relations with the successive tribes, to obtain treaties with them, and to procure the release of such English captives as were still in their hands. By the close of November, 1764, the work was complete, and Bouquet was back at Fort Pitt. Pennsylvania and Virginia honored him with votes of thanks; the King formally expressed his gratitude and tendered him the military governorship of the newly acquired territory of Florida.

The general pacification of the Northwest was accomplished by treaties with the natives in great councils held at Niagara, Presqu'isle (Erie), and Detroit. Pontiac had fled to the Maumee country to the west of Lake Erie, whence he still hurled his ineffectual threats at the "dogs in red." His power, however, was broken. The most he could do was to gather four hundred warriors on the Maumee and Illinois and present himself at Fort Chartres with a demand for weapons and ammunition with which to keep up the war. The French

commander, who was now daily awaiting orders to turn the fortress over to the English, refused; and a deputation dispatched to New Orleans in quest of the desired equipment received no reply save that New Orleans itself, with all the country west of the river, had been ceded to Spain. The futility of further resistance on the part of Pontiac was apparent. In 1765 the disappointed chieftain gave pledges of friendship; and in the following year he and other leaders made a formal submission to Sir William Johnson at Oswego, and Pontiac renounced forever the bold design to make himself at a stroke lord of the West and deliverer of his country from English domination.

For three years the movements of this disappointed Indian leader are uncertain. Most of the time, apparently, he dwelt in the Maumee country, leading the existence of an ordinary warrior. Then, in the spring of 1769, he appeared at the settlements on the middle Mississippi. At the newly founded French town of St. Louis, on the Spanish side of the river, he visited an old friend, the commandant Saint Ange de Bellerive. Thence he crossed to Cahokia, where Indian and creole alike welcomed him and made him the central figure in a series of boisterous festivities.

An English trader in the village, observing jealously the honors that were paid the visitor, resolved that an old score should forthwith be evened up. A Kaskaskian redskin was bribed, with a barrel of liquor and with promises of further reward, to put the fallen leader out of the way; and the bargain was hardly sealed before the deed was done. Stealing upon his victim as he walked in the neighboring forest, the assassin buried a tomahawk in his brain, and "thus basely," in the words of Parkman, "perished the champion of a ruined race." Claimed by Saint-Ange, the body was borne across the river and buried with military honors near the new Fort St. Louis. The site of Pontiac's grave was soon forgotten, and today the people of a great city trample over and about it without heed.

CHAPTER II

“A LAIR OF WILD BEASTS”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, who was in London in 1760 as agent of the Pennsylvania Assembly, gave the British ministers some wholesome advice on the terms of the peace that should be made with France. The St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes regions, he said, must be retained by England at all costs. Moreover, the Mississippi Valley must be taken, in order to provide for the growing populations of the seaboard colonies suitable lands in the interior, and so keep them engaged in agriculture. Otherwise these populations would turn to manufacturing, and the industries of the mother country would suffer.

The treaty of peace, three years later, brought the settlement which Franklin suggested. The vast American back country, with its inviting rivers and lakes, its shaded hills, and its sunny prairies, became English territory. The English people had,

however, only the vaguest notion of the extent, appearance, and resources of their new possession. Even the officials who drew the treaty were as ignorant of the country as of middle Africa. Prior to the outbreak of the war no widely known English writer had tried to describe it; and the absorbing French books of Lahontan, Hennepin, and Charlevoix had reached but a small circle. The prolonged conflict in America naturally stimulated interest in the new country. The place-names of the upper Ohio became household words, and enterprising publishers put out not only translations of the French writers but compilations by Englishmen designed, in true journalistic fashion, to meet the demands of the hour for information.

These publications displayed amazing misconceptions of the lands described. They neither estimated aright the number and strength of the French settlements nor dispelled the idea that the western country was of little value. Even the most brilliant Englishman of the day, Dr. Samuel Johnson, an ardent defender of the treaty of 1763, wrote that the large tracts of America added by the war to the British dominions were “only the barren parts of the continent, the refuse of the earlier adventurers, which the French, who came last, had

taken only as better than nothing." As late indeed as 1789, William Knox, long Under-Secretary for the Colonies, declared that Americans could not settle the western territory "for ages," and that the region must be given up to barbarism like the plains of Asia, with a population as unstable as the Scythians and Tartars. But the shortsightedness of these distant critics can be forgiven when one recalls that Franklin himself, while conjuring up a splendid vision of the western valleys teeming with a thriving population, supposed that the dream would not be realized for "some centuries." None of these observers dreamt that the territories transferred in 1763 would have within seventy-five years a population almost equal to that of Great Britain.

The ink with which the Treaty of Paris was signed was hardly dry before the King and his ministers were confronted with the task of providing government for the new possessions and of solving problems of land tenure and trade. Still more imperative were measures to conciliate the Indians; for already Pontiac's rebellion had been in progress four months, and the entire back country was aflame. It must be confessed that a continental wilderness swarming with murderous savages was

an inheritance whose aspect was by no means altogether pleasing to the English mind.

The easiest solution of the difficulty was to let things take their course. Let seaboard populations spread at will over the new lands; let them carry on trade in their own way, and make whatever arrangements with the native tribes they desire. Colonies such as Virginia and New York, which had extensive western claims, would have been glad to see this plan adopted. Strong objections, however, were raised. Colonies which had no western claims feared the effects of the advantages which their more fortunate neighbors would enjoy. Men who had invested heavily in lands lying west of the mountains felt that their returns would be diminished and delayed if the back country were thrown open to settlers. Some people thought that the Indians had a moral right to protection against wholesale white invasion of their hunting-grounds, and many considered it expedient, at all events, to offer such protection.

After all, however, it was the King and his ministers who had it in their power to settle the question; and from their point of view it was desirable to keep the western territories as much as possible apart from the older colonies, and to regulate,

with farsighted policy, their settlement and trade. Eventually, it was believed, the territories would be cut into new colonies; and experience with the seaboard dependencies was already such as to suggest the desirability of having the future settlements more completely under government control from the beginning.

After due consideration, King George and his ministers made known their policy on October 7, 1763, in a comprehensive proclamation. The first subject dealt with was government. Four new provinces — “Quebec, East Florida, West Florida, and Grenada”¹ — were set up in the ceded territories, and their populations were guaranteed all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the inhabitants of the older colonies. The Mississippi Valley, however, was included in no one of these provinces; and, curiously, there was no provision whatever for the government of the French settlements lying

¹ The Proclamation of 1763 drew the boundaries of “four distinct and separate governments.” Grenada was to include the island of that name, together with the Grenadines, Dominico, St. Vincent, and Tobago. The Floridas lay south of the bounds of Georgia and east of the Mississippi River. The Apalachicola River was to be the dividing line between East and West Florida. Quebec included the modern province of that name and that part of Ontario lying north of a line drawn from Lake Nipissing to the point where the forty-fifth parallel intersects the St. Lawrence River.

within it. The number and size of these settlements were underestimated, and apparently it was supposed that all the *habitants* and soldiers would avail themselves of their privilege of withdrawing from the ceded territories.

The disposition made of the great rectangular area bounded by the Alleghanies, the Mississippi, the Lakes, and the Gulf, was fairly startling. With fine disregard of the chartered claims of the seaboard colonies and of the rights of pioneers already settled on frontier farms, the whole was erected into an Indian reserve. No “loving subject” might purchase land or settle in the territory without special license; present residents should “forthwith remove themselves”; trade should be carried on only by permit and under close surveillance; officers were to be stationed among the tribes to preserve friendly relations and to apprehend fugitives from colonial justice.

The objects of this drastic scheme were never clearly stated. Franklin believed that the main purpose was to conciliate the Indians. Washington agreed with him. Later historians have generally thought that what the English Government had chiefly in mind was to limit the bounds of the seaboard colonies, with a view to preserving im-

perial control over colonial affairs. Very likely both of these motives weighed heavily in the decision. At all events, Lord Hillsborough, who presided over the meetings of the Lords of Trade when the proclamation was discussed, subsequently wrote that the "capital object" of the Government's policy was to confine the colonies so that they should be kept in easy reach of British trade and of the authority necessary to keep them in due subordination to the mother country, and he added that the extension of the fur trade depended "entirely upon the Indians being undisturbed in the possession of their hunting-grounds."¹

It does not follow that the King and his advisers intended that the territory should be kept forever intact as a forest preserve. They seem to have contemplated that, from time to time, cessions would be secured from the Indians and tracts would be opened for settlement. But every move was to be made in accordance with plans formulated or authorized in England. The restrictive policy won by no means universal assent in the mother country. The Whigs generally opposed it,

¹ But as Lord Hillsborough had just taken office and adopted bodily a policy formulated by his predecessor, he is none too good an authority. See Alvord's *Mississippi Valley in British Politics*, vol. 1, pp. 203-4.

and Burke thundered against it as “an attempt to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men.”

In America there was a disposition to take the proclamation lightly as being a mere sop to the Indians. But wherever it was regarded seriously, it was hotly resented. After passing through an arduous war, the colonists were ready to enter upon a new expansive era. The western territories were theirs by charter, by settlement, and by conquest. The Indian population, they believed, belonged to the unprogressive and unproductive peoples of the earth. Every acre of fertile soil in America called to the thrifty agriculturist; every westward flowing river invited to trade and settlement — as well, therefore, seek to keep back the ocean with a broom as to stop by mere decree the tide of homeseekers. Some of the colonies made honest attempts to compel the removal of settlers from the reserved lands beyond their borders, and Pennsylvania went so far as to decree the death penalty for all who should refuse to remove. But the law was never enforced.

The news of the cession of the eastern bank of the Mississippi to the English brought consternation to

the two or three thousand French people living in the settlements of the Kaskaskia, Illinois, and Wabash regions. The transfer of the western bank to Spain did not become known promptly, and for months the *habitants* supposed that by taking up their abode on the opposite side of the stream they would continue under their own flag. Many of them crossed the Mississippi to find new abodes even after it was announced that the land had passed to Spain.

From first to last these settlements on the Mississippi, the Wabash, and the Illinois had remained, in French hands, mere sprawling villages. The largest of them, Kaskaskia, may have contained in its most flourishing days two thousand people, many of them *voyageurs*, *coureurs-de-bois*, converted Indians, and transients of one sort or another. In 1765 there were not above seventy permanent families. Few of the towns, indeed, attained a population of more than two or three hundred. All French colonial enterprise had been based on the assumption that settlers would be few. The trader preferred it so, because settlements meant restrictions upon his traffic. The Jesuit was of the same mind, because such settlements broke up his mission field. The Government

at Paris forbade the emigration of the one class of people that cared to emigrate, the Huguenots.

Though some of the settlements had picturesque sites and others drew distinction from their fortifications, in general they presented a drab appearance. There were usually two or three long, narrow streets, with no paving, and often knee-deep with mud. The houses were built on either side, at intervals sufficient to give space for yards and garden plots, each homestead being enclosed with a crude picket fence. Wood and thatch were the commonest building materials, although stone was sometimes used; and the houses were regularly one story high, with large vine-covered verandas. Land was abundant and cheap. Every enterprising settler had a plot for himself, and as a rule one large field, or more, was held for use in common. In these, the operations of ploughing, sowing, and reaping were carefully regulated by public ordinance. Occasionally a village drew some distinction from the proximity of a large, well-managed estate, such as that of the opulent M. Beauvais of Kaskaskia, in whose mill and brewery more than eighty slaves were employed.

Agriculture was carried on somewhat extensively, and it is recorded that, in the year 1746

alone, when there was a shortage of foodstuffs at New Orleans, the Illinois settlers were able to send thither "upward of eight hundred thousand weight of flour." Hunting and trading, however, continued to be the principal occupations; and the sugar, indigo, cotton, and other luxuries which the people were able to import directly from Europe were paid for mainly with consignments of furs, hides, tallow, and beeswax. Money was practically unknown in the settlements, so that domestic trade likewise took the form of simple barter. Periods of industry and prosperity alternated with periods of depression, and the easy-going *habitants* — "farmers, hunters, traders by turn, with a strong admixture of unprogressive Indian blood" — tended always to relapse into utter indolence.

Some of these French towns, however, were seats of culture; and none was wholly barren of diversions. Kaskaskia had a Jesuit college and likewise a monastery. Cahokia had a school for Indian youth. Fort Chartres, we are gravely told, was "the center of life and fashion in the West." If everyday existence was humdrum, the villagers had always the opportunity for voluble conversation "each from his own balcony"; and there were scores of Church festivals, not to mention birth-

days, visits of travelers or neighbors, and homecomings of hunters and traders, which invited to festivity. Balls and dances and other merry-makings at which the whole village assembled supplied the wants of a people proverbially fond of amusement. Indeed, French civilization in the Mississippi and Illinois country was by no means without charm.

Kaskaskia, in the wonderfully fertile “American Bottom,” maintained its existence, in spite of the cession to the English, as did also Vincennes farther east on the Wabash. Fort Chartres, a stout fortification whose walls were more than two feet thick, remained the seat of the principal garrison, and some traces of French occupancy survived on the Illinois. Cahokia was deserted, save for the splendid mission-farm of St. Sulpice, with its thirty slaves, its herd of cattle, and its mill, which the fathers before returning to France sold to a thrifty Frenchman not averse to becoming an English subject. A few posts were abandoned altogether. Some of the departing inhabitants went back to France; some followed the French commandant, Neyon de Villiers, down the river to New Orleans; many gathered up their possessions, even to the frames and clapboards of their houses, and

took refuge in the new towns which sprang up on the western bank. One of these new settlements was Ste. Geneviève, strategically located near the lead mines from which the entire region had long drawn its supplies of shot. Another, which was destined to greater importance, was St. Louis, established as a trading post on the richly wooded bluffs opposite Cahokia by Pierre Laclède in 1764.

Associated with Laclède in his fur-trading operations at the new post was a lithe young man named Pierre Chouteau. In 1846 — eighty-two years afterwards — Francis Parkman sat on the spacious veranda of Pierre Chouteau's country house near the city of St. Louis and heard from the lips of the venerable merchant stories of Pontiac, Saint-Ange, Croghan, and all the western worthies, red and white, of two full generations. "Not all the magic of a dream," the historian remarks, "nor the enchantments of an Arabian tale, could outmatch the waking realities which were to rise upon the vision of Pierre Chouteau. Where, in his youth, he had climbed the woody bluff, and looked abroad on prairies dotted with bison, he saw, with the dim eye of his old age, the land darkened for many a furlong with the clustered roofs of the western metropolis. For the silence of the wilderness, he

heard the clang and turmoil of human labor, the din of congregated thousands; and where the great river rolls down through the forest, in lonely grandeur, he saw the waters lashed into foam beneath the prows of panting steamboats, flocking to the broad levee.”

Pontiac's war long kept the English from taking actual possession of the western country. Meanwhile Saint-Ange, commanding the remnant of the French garrison at Fort Chartres, resisted as best he could the demands of the redskins for assistance against their common enemy and hoped daily for the appearance of an English force to relieve him of his difficult position. In the spring of 1764 an English officer, Major Loftus, with a body of troops lately employed in planting English authority in “East Florida” and “West Florida,” set out from New Orleans to take possession of the up-river settlements. A few miles above the mouth of the Red, however, the boats were fired on, without warning, from both banks of the stream, and many of the men were killed or wounded. The expedition retreated down the river with all possible speed. This display of faintheartedness won the keen ridicule of the French, and the Governor, D'Abadie, with mock

magnanimity, offered an escort of French soldiery to protect the party on its way back to Pensacola! Within a few months a second attempt was projected, but news of the bad temper of the Indians caused the leader, Captain Pittman, to turn back after reaching New Orleans.

Baffled in this direction, the new commander-in-chief, General Gage, resolved to accomplish the desired end by an expedition from Fort Pitt. Pontiac, however, was known to be still plotting vengeance at that time, and it seemed advisable to break the way for the proposed expedition by a special mission to placate the Indians. For this delicate task Sir William Johnson selected a trader of long experience and of good standing among the western tribes, George Croghan. Notwithstanding many mishaps, the plan was carried out. With two boats and a considerable party of soldiers and friendly Delawares, Croghan left Fort Pitt in May, 1765. As he descended the Ohio he carefully plotted the river's windings and wrote out an interesting description of the fauna and flora observed. All went well until he reached the mouth of the Wabash. There the party was set upon by a band of Kickapoos, who killed half a dozen of his men. Fluent apologies were at once offered. They had

made the attack, they explained, only because the French had reported that the Indians with Croghan's band were Cherokees, the Kickapoos' most deadly enemies. Now that their mistake was apparent, the artful emissaries declared, their regret was indeed deep.

All of this was sheer pretense, and Croghan and his surviving followers were kept under close guard and were carried along with the Kickapoo band up the Wabash to Vincennes, where the trader encountered old Indian friends who soundly rebuked the captors for their inhospitality. Croghan knew the Indian nature too well to attempt to thwart the plans of his “hosts.” Accordingly he went on with the band to the upper Wabash post Ouiatanon, where he received deputation after deputation from the neighboring tribes, smoked pipes of peace, made speeches, and shook hands with greasy warriors by the score. Here came a messenger from Saint-Ange asking him to proceed to Fort Chartres. Here, also, Pontiac met him, and, after being assured that the English had no intention of enslaving the natives, declared that he would no longer stand in the conquerors' path. Though in unexpected manner, Croghan's mission was accomplished, and, with many evidences of favor from

the natives, he went on to Detroit and thence to Niagara, where he reported to Johnson that the situation in the West was ripe for the establishment of English sovereignty.

There was no reason for further delay, and Captain Thomas Sterling was dispatched with a hundred Highland veterans to take over the settlements. Descending the Ohio from Fort Pitt, the expedition reached Fort Chartres just as the frosty air began to presage the coming of winter. On October 10, 1765, — more than two and a half years after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, — Saint-Ange made the long-desired transfer of authority. General Gage's high-sounding proclamation was read, the British flag was run up, and Sterling's red-coated soldiery established itself in the citadel. In due time small detachments were sent to Vincennes and other posts; and the triumph of the British power over Frenchman and Indian was complete. Saint-Ange retired with his little garrison to St. Louis, where, until the arrival of a Spanish lieutenant-governor in 1770, he acted by common consent as chief magistrate.

The creoles who passed under the English flag suffered little from the change. Their property and trading interests were not molested, and the

English commandants made no effort to displace the old laws and usages. Documents were written and records were kept in French as well as English. The village priest and the notary retained their accustomed places of paternal authority. The old idyllic life went on. Population increased but little; barter, hunting, and trapping still furnished the means of a simple subsistence; and with music, dancing, and holiday festivities the light-hearted populace managed to crowd more pleasure into a year than the average English frontiersman got in a lifetime.

For a year or two after the European pacification of 1763 Indian disturbances held back the flood of settlers preparing to enter, through the Alleghany passes, the upper valleys of the westward flowing rivers. Neither Indian depredations nor proclamations of kings, however, could long interpose an effectual restraint. The supreme object of the settlers was to obtain land. Formerly there was land enough for all along the coasts or in the nearer uplands. But population, as Franklin computed, was doubling in twenty-five years; vacant areas had already been occupied; and desirable lands had been gathered into great speculative holdings. Newcomers were consequently forced to cross the

mountains — and not only newcomers, but all residents who were still land-hungry and ambitious to better their condition.

To such the appeal of the great West was irresistible. The English Government might indeed regard the region as a “barren waste” or a “profitless wilderness,” but not so the Scotch-Irish, Huguenot, and Palatine homeseekers who poured by the thousands through the Chesapeake and Delaware ports. Pushing past the settled seaboard country, these rugged men of adventure plunged joyously into the forest depths and became no less the founders of the coming nation than were the Pilgrims and the Cavaliers.

Ahead of the home-builder, however, went the speculator. It has been remarked that “from the time when Joliet and La Salle first found their way into the heart of the great West up to the present day when far-off Alaska is in the throes of development, ‘big business’ has been engaged in western speculation.”¹ In pre-revolutionary days this speculation took the form of procuring, by grant or purchase, large tracts of western land which were to be sold and colonized at a profit. Franklin was interested in a number of such projects. Washing-

¹ Alvord, *Mississippi Valley in British Politics*, vol. I, p. 86.

ton, the Lees, and a number of other prominent Virginians were connected with an enterprise which absorbed the old Ohio Company; and in 1770 Washington, piloted by Croghan, visited the Ohio country with a view to the discovery of desirable areas. Eventually he acquired western holdings amounting to thirty-three thousand acres, with a water-front of sixteen miles on the Ohio and of forty miles on the Great Kanawha.

In 1773 a company promoted by Samuel Wharton, Benjamin Franklin, William Johnson, and a London banker, Thomas Walpole, secured the grant of two and a half million acres between the Alleghanies and the Ohio, which was to be the seat of a colony called Vandalia. This departure from the policy laid down in the Proclamation of 1763 was made reluctantly, but with a view to giving a definite western limit to the seaboard provinces. The Government's purpose was fully understood in America, and the project was warmly opposed, especially by Virginia, the chartered claimant of the territory. The early outbreak of the Revolutionary War wrecked the project, and nothing ever came of it — or indeed of any colonization proposal contemporary with it. By and large, the building of the West was to be the work, not of colonizing

companies or other corporate interests, but of individual homeseekers, moving into the new country on their own responsibility and settling where and when their own interests and inclinations led.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS

ONE of the grievances given prominence in the Declaration of Independence was that the English Crown had "abolished the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same arbitrary rule into these colonies." The measure which was in the minds of the signers was the Quebec Act of 1774; and the feature to which they especially objected was the extension of this peculiarly governed Canadian province to include the whole of the territory north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi.

The Quebec Act was passed primarily to remedy a curious mistake made by King George's ministers eleven years earlier. The Proclamation of 1763 had been intended to apply to the new French-

speaking possessions in only a general way, leaving matters of government and law to be regulated at a later date. But through oversight it ordained the establishment of English law, and even of a representative assembly, precisely as in the other new provinces. The English governors were thus put in an awkward position. They were required to introduce English political forms and legal practices. Yet the inexperience and suspicion of the people made it unwise, if not impossible, to do so. When, for example, jury trial was broached, the peasants professed to be quite unable to understand why the English should prefer to have matters of law decided by tailors and shoemakers rather than by a judge; and as for a legislature, they frankly confessed that assemblies "had drawn upon other colonies so much distress, and had occasioned so much riot and bloodshed, that they had hoped never to have one."

The Act of 1774 relieved the situation by restoring French law in civil affairs, abolishing jury trial except in criminal cases, rescinding the grant of representative government, and confirming the Catholic clergy in the rights and privileges which they had enjoyed under the old régime. This would have aroused no great amount of feeling

among New Englanders and Virginians if the new arrangements had been confined to the bounds of the original province. But they were not so restricted. On the contrary, the new province was made to include the great region between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, southward to the Ohio; and it was freely charged that a principal object of the English Government was to sever the West from the shore colonies and permanently link it with the St. Lawrence Valley rather than with the Atlantic slope.

At all events, the Quebec Act marked the beginning of civil government in the great Northwest. On November 9, 1775, Henry Hamilton appeared as Lieutenant-Governor at the new capital, Detroit. Already the "shot heard round the world" had been fired by the farmers at Lexington; and Hamilton had been obliged to thread his way through General Montgomery's lines about Montreal in the guise of a Canadian. Arrived at his new seat of authority, he found a pleasant, freshly fortified town whose white population had grown to fifteen hundred, including a considerable number of English-speaking settlers. The country round was overrun with traders, who cheated and cajoled the Indians without conscience; the na-

tives, in turn, were a nondescript lot, showing in pitiful manner the bad effects of their contact with the whites.

As related by a contemporary chronicler — a Pennsylvanian who lived for years among the western tribes — an Indian hunting party on arriving at Detroit would trade perhaps a third of the peltries which they brought in for fine clothes, ammunition, paint, tobacco, and like articles. Then a keg of brandy would be purchased, and a council would be held to decide who was to get drunk and who to keep sober. All arms and clubs were taken away and hidden, and the orgy would begin. It was the task of those who kept sober to prevent the drunken ones from killing one another, a task always hazardous and frequently unsuccessful, sometimes as many as five being killed in a night. When the keg was empty, brandy was brought by the kettleful and ladled out with large wooden spoons; and this was kept up until the last skin had been disposed of. Then, dejected, wounded, lamed, with their fine new shirts torn, their blankets burned, and with nothing but their ammunition and tobacco saved, they would start off down the river to hunt in the Ohio country and begin again the same round of alternating toil

and debauchery. In the history of the country there is hardly a more depressing chapter than that which records the easy descent of the red man, once his taste for "fire water" was developed, to bestiality and impotence.

The coming on of the Revolution produced no immediate effects in the West. The meaning of the occurrences round Boston was but slowly grasped by the frontier folk. There was little indeed that the Westerners could do to help the cause of the eastern patriots, and most of them, if left alone, would have been only distant spectators of the conflict. But orders given to the British agents and commanders called for the ravaging of the trans-Alleghany country; and as a consequence the West became an important theater of hostilities.

The British agents had no troops with which to undertake military operations on a considerable scale, but they had one great resource — the Indians — and this they used with a reckless disregard of all considerations of humanity. In the summer of 1776 the Cherokees were furnished with fifty horse-loads of ammunition and were turned loose upon the back country of Georgia and the Carolinas. Other tribes were prompted to

depredations farther north. White, half-breed, and Indian agents went through the forests inciting the natives to deeds of horror; prices were fixed on scalps — and it is significant of the temper of these agents that a woman's scalp was paid for as readily as a man's.

In every corner of the wilderness the bloody scenes of Pontiac's war were now reenacted. Bands of savages lurked about the settlements, ready to attack at any unguarded moment; and wherever the thin blue smoke of a settler's cabin rose, prowlers lay in wait. A woman might not safely go a hundred yards to milk a cow, or a man lead a horse to water. The farmer carried a gun strapped to his side as he ploughed, and he scarcely dared venture into the woods for the winter's supply of fuel and game. Hardly a day passed on which a riderless horse did not come galloping into some lonely clearing, telling of a fresh tragedy on the trail.

The rousing of the Indians against the frontiersmen was an odious act. The people of the back country were in not the slightest degree responsible for the revolt against British authority in the East. They were non-combatants, and no amount of success in sweeping them from their homes could

affect the larger outcome. The crowning villainy of this shameful policy was the turning of the redskins loose to prey upon helpless women and children.

The responsibility for this inhumanity must be borne in some degree by the government of George III. "God and nature," wrote the Earl of Suffolk piously, "hath put into our hands the scalping-knife and tomahawk, to torture them into unconditional submission." But the fault lay chiefly with the British officers at the western posts — most of all, with Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton at Detroit. Probably no British representative in America was on better terms with the natives. He drank with them, sang war-songs with them, and received them with open arms when they came in from the forests with the scalps of white men dangling at their belts. A great council on the banks of the Detroit in June, 1778, was duly opened with prayer, after which Hamilton harangued the assembled Chippewas, Hurons, Mohawks, and Potawatomi on their "duties" in the war and congratulated them on the increasing numbers of their prisoners and scalps, and then urged them to redoubled activity by holding out the prospect of the complete expulsion of white men from the great interior hunting-grounds.

Scarcely were the deputations attending this council well on their way homewards when a courier arrived from the Illinois country bringing startling news. The story was that a band of three hundred rebels led by one George Rogers Clark had fallen upon the Kaskaskia settlements, had thrown the commandant into irons, and had exacted from the populace an oath of allegiance to the Continental Congress. It was reported, too, that Cahokia had been taken, and that, even as the messenger was leaving Kaskaskia, "Gibault, a French priest, had his horse ready saddled to go to Vincennes to receive the submission of the inhabitants in the name of the rebels."

George Rogers Clark was a Virginian, born in the foothills of Albemarle County three years before Braddock's defeat. His family was not of the landed gentry, but he received some education, and then, like Washington and many other adventuresome young men of the day, became a surveyor. At the age of twenty-two he was a member of Governor Dunmore's staff. During a surveying expedition he visited Kentucky, which so pleased him that in 1774 he decided to make that part of the back country his home. He was even then a man of powerful frame, with broad

brow, keen blue eyes, and a dash of red in his hair from a Scottish ancestress — a man, too, of ardent patriotism, strong common sense, and exceptional powers of initiative and leadership. Small wonder that in the rapidly developing commonwealth beyond the mountains he quickly became a dominating spirit.

With a view to organizing a civil government and impressing upon the Virginia authorities the need of defending the western settlements, the men of Kentucky held a convention at Harrodsburg in the spring of 1775 and elected two delegates to present their petition to the Virginia Assembly. Clark was one of them. The journey to Williamsburg was long and arduous, and the delegates arrived only to find that the Legislature had adjourned. The visit, none the less, gave Clark an opportunity to explain to the new Governor — “a certain Patrick Henry, of Hanover County,” as the royalist Dunmore contemptuously styled his successor — the situation in the back country and to obtain five hundred pounds of powder. He also induced the authorities to take steps which led to the definite organization of Kentucky as a county of Virginia.

In the bloody days that followed, most of the

pioneers saw nothing to be done except to keep close guard and beat off the Indians when they came. A year or two of that sort of desperate uncertainty gave Clark an idea. Why not meet the trouble at its source by capturing the British posts and suppressing the commandants whose orders were mainly responsible for the atrocities? There was just one obstacle: Kentucky could spare neither men nor money for the undertaking.

In the spring of 1777 two young hunters, disguised as traders, were dispatched to the Illinois country and to the neighborhood of Vincennes, to spy out the land. They brought back word that the posts were not heavily manned, and that the French-speaking population took little interest in the war and was far from reconciled to British rule. The prospect seemed favorable. Without making his purpose known to anyone, Clark forthwith joined a band of disheartened settlers and made his way with them over the Wilderness Trail to Virginia. By this time a plan on the part of the rebels for the defense of the Kentucky settlements had grown into a scheme for the conquest of the whole Northwest.

Clark's proposal came opportunely. Burgoyne's surrender had given the colonial cause a rosy hue,

and already the question of the occupation of the Northwest had come up for discussion in Congress. Governor Henry thought well of the plan. He called Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, and George Wythe into conference, and on January 2, 1778, Clark was given two sets of orders — one, for publication, commissioning him to raise seven companies of fifty men each “in any county of the Commonwealth” for militia duty in Kentucky, the other, secret, authorizing him to use this force in an expedition for the capture of the “British post at Kaskasky.” To meet the costs, only twelve hundred pounds in depreciated continental currency could be raised. But the Governor and his friends promised to try to secure three hundred acres of land for each soldier, in case the project should succeed. The strictest secrecy was preserved, and, even if the Legislature had been in session, the project would probably not have been divulged to it.

Men and supplies were gathered at Fort Pitt and Wheeling and were carried down the Ohio to “the Falls,” opposite the site of Louisville. The real object of the expedition was concealed until this point was reached. On learning of the project, the men were surprised, and some refused to go

farther. But in a few weeks one hundred and seventy-five men, organized in four companies, were in readiness. The start was made on the 24th of June. Just as the little flotilla of clumsy flatboats was caught by the rapid current, the landscape was darkened by an eclipse of the sun. The superstitious said that this was surely an evil omen. But Clark was no believer in omens, and he ordered the *bateaux* to proceed. He had lately received news of the French alliance, and was surer than ever that the *habitants* would make common cause with his forces and give him complete success.

To appear on the Mississippi was to run the risk of betraying the object of the expedition to the defenders of the posts. Hence the wily commander decided to make the last stages of his advance by an overland route. At the deserted site of Fort Massac, nine miles below the mouth of the Tennessee, the little army left the Ohio and struck off northwest on a march of one hundred and twenty miles, as the crow flies, across the tangled forests and rich prairies of southern Illinois.

Six days brought the invaders to the Kaskaskia River, three miles above the principal settlement. Stealing silently along the bank of the stream on

the night of the 4th of July, they crossed in boats which they seized at a farmhouse and arrived at the palisades wholly unobserved. Half of the force was stationed in the form of a cordon, so that no one might escape. The remainder followed Clark through an unguarded gateway into the village.

According to a story long current, the officials of the post were that night giving a ball, and all of the élite, not of Kaskaskia alone but of the neighboring settlements as well, were joyously dancing in one of the larger rooms of the fort. Leaving his men some paces distant, Clark stepped to the entrance of the hall, and for some time leaned unobserved against the door-post, grimly watching the gayety. Suddenly the air was rent by a war-whoop which brought the dancers to a stop. An Indian brave, lounging in the firelight, had caught a glimpse of the tall, gaunt, buff and blue figure in the doorway and had recognized it. Women shrieked; men cursed; the musicians left their posts; all was disorder. Advancing, Clark struck a theatrical pose and in a voice of command told the merrymakers to go on with their dancing, but to take note that they now danced, not as subjects of King George but as Virginians. Finding that they were in no mood for further diversion, he

sent them to their homes; and all night they shivered with fear, daring not so much as to light a candle lest they should be set upon and murdered in their beds.

This account is wholly unsupported by contemporary testimony, and it probably sprang from the imagination of some good frontier story-teller. It contains at least this much truth, that the settlement, after being thrown into panic, was quickly and easily taken. Curiously enough, the commandant was a Frenchman, Rocheblave, who had thriftily entered the British service. True to the trust reposed in him, he protested and threatened, but to no avail. The garrison, now much diminished, was helpless, and the populace — British, French, and Indian alike — was not disposed to court disaster by offering armed resistance. Hence, on the morning after the capture the oath of fidelity was administered, and the American flag was hoisted for the first time within view of the Father of Waters. After dispatching word to General Carleton that he had been compelled to surrender the post to “the self-styled Colonel, Mr. Clark,” Rocheblave was sent as a captive to Williamsburg, where he soon broke parole and escaped. His slaves were sold for five hundred pounds, and the

money was distributed among the troops. Cahokia was occupied without resistance, and the French priest, Father Pierre Gibault, whose parish extended from Lake Superior to the Ohio, volunteered to go to Vincennes and win its inhabitants to the American cause.

Like Kaskaskia and Cahokia, the Wabash settlement had been put in charge of a commandant of French descent. The village, however, was at the moment without a garrison, and its chief stronghold, Fort Sackville, was untenanted. Gibault argued forcefully for acceptance of American sovereignty, and within two days the entire population filed into the little church and took the oath of allegiance. The astonished Indians were given to understand that their former "Great Father," the King of France, had returned to life, and that they must comply promptly with his wishes or incur his everlasting wrath for having given aid to the despised British.

Thus without the firing of a shot or the shedding of a drop of blood, the vast Illinois and Wabash country was won for the future United States. Clark's plan was such that its success was assured by its very audacity. It never occurred to the British authorities that their far western forts

were in danger, and they were wholly unprepared to fly to the defense of such distant posts. British sovereignty on the Mississippi was never recovered; and in the autumn of 1778 Virginia took steps to organize her new conquest by setting up the county of Illinois, which included all her territories lying "on the western side of the Ohio."

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUEST COMPLETED

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR HAMILTON had many faults, but sloth was not one of them; and when he heard what had happened he promptly decided to regain the posts and take the upstart Kentucky conqueror captive. Emissaries were sent to the Wabash country to stir up the Indians, and for weeks the Detroit settlement resounded with preparations for the expedition. Boats were built or repaired, guns were cleaned, ammunition was collected in boxes, provisions were put up in kegs or bags, baubles for the Indians were made or purchased. Cattle and wheels, together with a six-pounder, were sent ahead to be in readiness for use at various stages of the journey.

Further weeks were consumed in awaiting reinforcements which never came; and in early October, when the wild geese were scudding southward before the first snow flurries of the coming

winter, the commandant started for the reconquest with a motley force of thirty-six British regulars, forty-five local volunteers, seventy-nine local militia, and sixty Indians. Reënforcements were gathered on the road, so that when Vincennes was reached the little army numbered about five hundred. From Detroit the party dropped easily down the river to Lake Erie, where it narrowly escaped destruction in a blinding snowstorm. By good management, however, it was brought safely to the Maumee, up whose sluggish waters the *bateaux* were laboriously poled. A portage of nine miles gave access to the Wabash. Here the water was very shallow, and only by building occasional dikes to produce a current did the party find it possible to complete the journey. As conferences with the Indians further delayed them, it was not until a few days before Christmas that the invaders reached their goal.

The capture of Vincennes proved easy enough. The surrender, none the less, was made in good military style. There were two iron three-pounders in the wretched little fort, and one of these was loaded to the muzzle and placed in the open gate. As Hamilton and his men advanced, so runs a not very well authenticated story, Lieutenant

Helm stood by the gun with a lighted taper and called sternly upon the invaders to halt. The British leader demanded the surrender of the garrison. Helm parleyed and asked for terms. Hamilton finally conceded the honors of war, and Helm magnanimously accepted. Hamilton thereupon drew up his forces in a double line, the British on one side and the Indians on the other; and the garrison — one officer and one soldier — solemnly marched out between them! After the “conquerors” had regained their equanimity, the cross of St. George was once more run up on the fort. A body of French militia returned to British allegiance with quite as much facility as it had shown in accepting American sovereignty under the eloquence of Father Gibault; and the French inhabitants, gathered again in the church, with perfectly straight faces acknowledged that they had “sinned against God and man” by taking sides with the rebels, and promised to be loyal thereafter to George III.

Had the British forces immediately pushed on, this same scene might have been repeated at Kaskaskia and Cahokia. Clark’s position there was far from strong. Upon the expiration of their term of enlistment most of his men had gone back

to Kentucky or Virginia, and their places had been taken mainly by creoles, whose steadfastness was doubtful. Furthermore, the Indians were restless, and it was only by much vigilance and bravado that they were kept in a respectful mood. All this was well known to Hamilton, who now proposed to follow up the recapture of the Mississippi posts by the obliteration of all traces of American authority west of the Alleghanies.

The difficulties and dangers of a midwinter campaign in the flooded Illinois country were not to be lightly regarded, and weeks of contending with icy blasts and drenching rains lent a seat by an open fire unusual attractiveness. Hence the completion of the campaign was postponed until spring — a decision which proved the salvation of the American cause in the West. As means of subsistence were slender, most of the Detroit militia were sent home, and the Indians were allowed to scatter to their distant wigwams. The force kept at the post numbered only about eighty or ninety whites, with a few Indians.

Clark now had at Kaskaskia a band of slightly over a hundred men. He understood Hamilton's army to number five or six hundred. The outlook was dubious, until François Vigo, a friendly Span-

ish trader of St. Louis, escaping captivity at Vincennes, came to Kaskaskia with the information that Hamilton had sent away most of his troops; and this welcome news gave the doughty Kentuckian a brilliant idea. He would defend his post by attacking the invaders while they were yet at Vincennes, and before they were ready to resume operations. "The case is desperate," he wrote to Governor Henry, "but, sir, we must either quit the country or attack Mr. Hamilton." He had probably never heard of Scipio Africanus but, like that indomitable Roman, he proposed to carry the war straight into the enemy's country. "There were undoubtedly appalling difficulties," says Mr. Roosevelt, "in the way of a midwinter march and attack; and the fact that Clark attempted and performed the feat which Hamilton dared not try, marks just the difference between a man of genius and a good, brave, ordinary commander."

Preparations were pushed with all speed. A large, flat-bottomed boat, the *Willing*, was fitted out with four guns and was sent down the Mississippi with forty men to ascend the Ohio and the Wabash to a place of rendezvous not far from the coveted post. By early February the depleted companies were recruited to their full strength; and

after the enterprise had been solemnly blessed by Father Gibault, Clark and his forces, numbering one hundred and thirty men, pushed out upon the desolate, wind-swept prairie.

The distance to be covered was about two hundred and thirty miles. Under favorable circumstances, the trip could have been made in five or six days and with little hardship. The rainy season, however, was now at its height, and the country was one vast quagmire, overrun by swollen streams which could be crossed only at great risk. Ten days of wearisome marching brought the expedition to the forks of the Little Wabash. The entire region between the two channels was under water, and for a little time it looked as if the whole enterprise would have to be given up. There were no boats; provisions were running low; game was scarce; and fires could not be built for cooking.

But Clark could not be turned back by such difficulties. He plunged ahead of his men, struck up songs and cheers to keep them in spirit, played the buffoon, went wherever danger was greatest, and by an almost unmatched display of bravery, tact, and firmness, won the redoubled admiration of his suffering followers and held them together. Murmurs arose among the creoles, but the Ameri-

cans showed no signs of faltering. For more than a week the party floundered through the freezing water, picked its way from one outcropping bit of earth to another, and seldom found opportunity to eat or sleep. Rifles and powder-horns had to be borne by the hour above the soldiers' heads to keep them dry.

Finally, on the 23d of February, a supreme effort carried the troops across the Horseshoe Plain, breast-deep in water, and out upon high ground two miles from Vincennes. By this time many of the men were so weakened that they could drag themselves along only with assistance. But buffalo meat and corn were confiscated from the canoes of some passing squaws, and soon the troops were refreshed and in good spirits. The battle with the enemy ahead seemed as nothing when compared with the struggle with the elements which they had successfully waged. No exploit of the kind in American history surpasses this, unless it be Benedict Arnold's winter march through the wilderness of Maine in 1775 to attack Quebec.

Two or three creole hunters were now taken captive, and from them Clark learned that no one in Vincennes knew of his approach. They reported, however, that, although the *habitants* were tired

of the "Hair-Buyer's" presence and would gladly return to American allegiance, some two hundred Indians had just arrived at the fort. The *Willing* had not been heard from. But an immediate attack seemed the proper course; and the young colonel planned and carried it out with the curious mixture of bravery and braggadocio of which he was a past master.

First he drew up a lordly letter, addressed to the inhabitants of the town, and dispatched it by one of his creole prisoners. "Gentlemen," it ran, "being now within two miles of your village with my army . . . and not being willing to surprise you, I take this step to request such of you as are true citizens, and willing to enjoy the liberty I bring you, to remain still in your houses. And those, if any there be, that are friends to the King, will instantly repair to the fort and join the Hair-Buyer General and fight like men." Having thus given due warning, he led his "army" forward, marching and counter-marching his meager forces among the trees and hills to give an appearance of great numbers, while he and his captains helped keep up the illusion by galloping wildly here and there on horses they had confiscated, as if ordering a vast array. At nightfall the men advanced

upon the stockade and opened fire from two directions.

Not until a sergeant reeled from his chair with a bullet in his breast did the garrison realize that it was really under attack. The *habitants* had kept their secret well. There was a beating of drums and a hurrying to arms, and throughout the night a hot fusillade was kept up. By firing from behind houses and trees, and from rifle pits that were dug before the attack began, the Americans virtually escaped loss; while Hamilton's gunners were picked off as fast as they appeared at the port-holes of the fort. Clark's ammunition ran low, but the *habitants* furnished a fresh supply and at the same time a hot breakfast for the men. In a few hours the cannon were silenced, and parleys were opened. Hamilton insisted that he and his garrison were "not disposed to be awed into an action unworthy of British subjects," but they were plainly frightened, and Clark finally sent the commandant back to the fort from a conference in the old French church with the concession of one hour's time in which to decide what he would do. To help him make up his mind, the American leader caused half a dozen Indians who had just returned from the forests with white men's scalps

dangling at their belts to be tomahawked and thrown into the river within plain view of the garrison.

Surrender promptly followed. Hamilton and twenty-five of his men were sent off as captives to Virginia, where the commandant languished in prison until, in 1780, he was paroled at the suggestion of Washington. On taking an oath of neutrality, the remaining British sympathizers were set at liberty. For a second time the American flag floated over Indiana soil, not again to be lowered.

Immediately after the capitulation of Hamilton, a scouting-party captured a relief expedition which was on its way from Detroit and placed in Clark's hands ten thousand pounds' worth of supplies for distribution as prize-money among his deserving men. The commander's cup of satisfaction was filled to the brim when the *Willing* appeared with a long-awaited messenger from Governor Henry who brought to the soldiers the thanks of the Legislature of Virginia for the capture of Kaskaskia and also the promise of more substantial reward.

The whole of the Illinois and Indiana country was now in American hands. Tenure, however,

was precarious so long as Detroit remained a British stronghold, and Clark now broadened his plans to embrace the capture of that strategic place. Leaving Vincennes in charge of a garrison of forty men, he returned to Kaskaskia with the *Willing* and set about organizing a new expedition. Kentucky pledged three hundred men, and Virginia promised to help. But when, in midsummer, the commander returned to Vincennes to consolidate and organize his forces, he found the numbers to be quite insufficient. From Kentucky there came only thirty men.

Disappointment followed disappointment; he was ordered to build a fort at the mouth of the Ohio — a project of which he had himself approved; and when at last he had under his command a force that might have been adequate for the Detroit expedition, he was obliged to use it in meeting a fresh incursion of savages which had been stirred up by the new British commandant on the Lakes. But Thomas Jefferson, who in 1779 succeeded Henry as Governor of Virginia, was deeply interested in the Detroit project, and at his suggestion Washington gave Clark an order on the commandant of Fort Pitt for guns, supplies, and such troops as could be spared. On January 22,

1781, Jefferson appointed Clark "brigadier-general of the forces to be embodied on an expedition westward of the Ohio." Again Clark was doomed to disappointment. One obstacle after another interposed. Yet as late as May, 1781, the expectant conqueror wrote to Washington that he had "not yet lost sight of Detroit." Suitable opportunity for the expedition never came, and when peace was declared the northern stronghold was still in British hands.

Clark's later days were clouded. Although Virginia gave him six thousand acres of land in southern Indiana and presented him with a sword, peace left him without employment, and he was never able to adjust himself to the changed situation. For many years he lived alone in a little cabin on the banks of the Ohio, spending his time hunting, fishing, and brooding over the failure of Congress to reward him in more substantial manner for his services. He was land-poor, lonely, and embittered. In 1818 he died a paralyzed and helpless cripple. His resting place is in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville; the finest statue of him stands in Monument Circle, Indianapolis — "an athletic figure, scarcely past youth, tall and sinewy, with a drawn sword, in an attitude of energetic

encouragement, as if getting his army through the drowned lands of the Wabash.”¹

The capture of Vincennes determined the fate of the Northwest. Frontier warfare nevertheless went steadily on. In 1779 Spain entered the contest as an ally of France, and it became the object of the British commanders on the Lakes not only to recover the posts lost to the Americans but to seize St. Louis and other Spanish strongholds on the west bank of the Mississippi. In 1780 Lieutenant-Governor Patrick Sinclair, a bustling, garrulous old soldier stationed at Michilimackinac, sent a force of some nine hundred traders, servants, and Indians down the Mississippi to capture both the American and Spanish settlements. An attack on St. Louis failed, as did likewise a series of efforts against Cahokia and Kaskaskia, and the survivors were glad to reach their northern headquarters again, with nothing to show for their pains except a dozen prisoners.

Not to be outdone, the Spanish commandant at St. Louis sent an expedition to capture British posts in the Lake country. An arduous winter march brought the avengers and their Indian allies to Fort St. Joseph, a mile or two west of the

¹ Hosmer, *Short History of the Mississippi Valley*, p. 94.

present city of Niles, Michigan. It would be ungracious to say that this post was selected for attack because it was without a garrison. At all events, the place was duly seized, the Spanish standard was set up, and possession of "the fort and its dependencies" was taken in the name of his Majesty Don Carlos III. No effort was made to hold the settlement permanently, and the British from Detroit promptly retook it. Probably the sole intention had been to add somewhat to the strength of the Spanish position at the forthcoming negotiations for peace.

The war in the West ended, as it began, in a carnival of butchery. Treacherous attacks, massacres, burnings, and pillagings were everyday occurrences, and white men were hardly less at fault than red. Indeed the most discreditable of all the recorded episodes of the time was a heartless massacre by Americans of a large band of Indians that had been Christianized by Moravian missionaries and brought together in a peaceful community on the Muskingum. This slaughter of the innocents at Gnadenhütten ("the Tents of Grace") reveals the frontiersman at his worst. But it was dearly paid for. From the Lakes to the Gulf redskins rose for vengeance. Villages were wiped out,

and murderous bands swept far into Virginia and Pennsylvania, evading fortified posts in order to fall with irresistible fury on unsuspecting traders and settlers.

In midsummer, 1782, news of the cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and her former seaboard colonies reached the back country, and the commandant at Detroit made an honest effort to stop all offensive operations. A messenger failed, however, to reach a certain Captain Caldwell, operating in the Ohio country, in time to prevent him from attacking a Kentucky settlement and bringing on the deadly Battle of Blue Licks, in which the Americans were defeated with a loss of seventy-one men. George Rogers Clark forthwith led a retaliatory expedition against the Miami towns, taking prisoners, recapturing whites, and destroying British trading establishments; and with this final flare-up the Revolution came to an end in the Northwest.

The soldier had won the back country for the new nation. Could the diplomat hold it? As early as March 19, 1779, — just three weeks after Clark's capture of Vincennes, — the Continental Congress formally laid claim to the whole of the Northwest; and a few months later John Adams

was instructed to negotiate for peace on the understanding that the country's northern and western boundaries were to be the line of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. When, in 1781, Franklin, Jefferson, Jay, and Laurens were appointed to assist Adams in the negotiation, the new Congress of the Confederation stated that the earlier instructions on boundaries represented its "desires and expectations."

It might have been supposed that if Great Britain could be brought to accept these terms there would be no further difficulty. But obstacles arose from other directions. France had entered the war for her own reasons, and looked with decidedly more satisfaction on the defeat of Great Britain than on the prospect of a new and powerful nation in the Western Hemisphere. Furthermore, she was in close alliance with Spain; and Spain had no sympathy whatever with the American cause as such. At all events, she did not want the United States for a neighbor on the Mississippi.

The American commissioners were under instructions to make no peace without consulting France. But when, in the spring of 1782, Jay came upon the scene of the negotiations at Paris, he demurred. He had been for some time in

Spain, and he carried to Paris not only a keen contempt for the Spanish people and Spanish politics, but a strong suspicion that Spain was using her influence to keep the United States from getting the territory between the Lakes and the Ohio. France soon fell under similar suspicion, for she was under obligations, as everyone knew, to satisfy Spain; and little time elapsed before the penetrating American diplomat was semiofficially assured that his suspicions in both directions were well founded.

The mainspring of Spanish policy was the desire to make the Gulf of Mexico a closed sea, under exclusive Spanish control. This plan would be frustrated if the Americans acquired an outlet on the Gulf; furthermore, it would be jeopardized if they retained control on the upper Mississippi. Hence, the States must be kept back from the great river; safety dictated that they be confined to the region east of the Appalachians.

An ingenious plan was thereupon developed. Spain was to resume possession of the Floridas, insuring thereby the coveted unbroken coast line on the Gulf. The vast area between the Mississippi and the Appalachians and south of the Ohio was to be an Indian territory, half under Spanish and

half under American "protection." The entire region north of the Ohio was to be kept by Great Britain, or, at the most, divided — on lines to be determined — between Great Britain and the United States. From Rayneval, confidential secretary of the French foreign minister Vergennes, Jay learned that the French Government proposed to give this scheme its support.

Had such terms as these been forced on the new nation, the hundreds of Virginian and Pennsylvanian pioneers who had given up their lives in the planting of American civilization in the back country would have turned in their graves. But Jay had no notion of allowing the scheme to succeed. He sent an emissary to England to counteract the Spanish and French influence. He converted Adams to his way of thinking, and even raised doubts in Franklin's mind. Finally he induced his colleagues to cast their instructions to the winds and negotiate a treaty with the mother country independently.

This simplified matters immensely. Great Britain was a beaten nation, and from the beginning her commissioners played a losing game. There was much haggling over the loyalists, the fisheries, debts; but the boundaries were quickly drawn.

Great Britain preferred to see the disputed western country in American hands rather than to leave a chance for it to fall under the control of one of her European rivals.

Accordingly, the Treaty of Paris drew the interior boundary of the new nation through the Great Lakes and connecting waters to the Lake of the Woods; from the most northwestern point of the Lake of the Woods due west to the Mississippi (an impossible line); down the Mississippi to latitude 31° ; thence east, by that parallel and by the line which is now the northern boundary of Florida, to the ocean. Three nations, instead of two, again shared the North American Continent: Great Britain kept the territory north of the Lakes; Spain ruled the Floridas and everything west of the Mississippi; the United States held the remainder — an area of more than 825,000 square miles, with a population of three and one half millions.

CHAPTER V

WAYNE, THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIANS

"THIS federal republic," wrote the Spanish Count d'Aranda to his royal master in 1782, "is born a pigmy. A day will come when it will be a giant, even a colossus. Liberty of conscience, the facility for establishing a new population on immense lands, as well as the advantages of the new government, will draw thither farmers and artisans from all the nations."

Aranda correctly weighed the value of the country's vast stretches of free and fertile land. The history of the United States has been largely a story of the clearing of forests, the laying out of farms, the erection of homes, the construction of highways, the introduction of machinery, the building of railroads, the rise of towns and of great cities. The Germans of Wisconsin and Missouri, the Scandinavians of Minnesota and the Dakotas, the Poles and Hungarians of Chicago,

the Irish and Italians of a thousand communities, attest the fact that the "farmers and artisans from all the nations" have had an honorable part in the achievement.

In laying plans for the development of the western lands the statesmanship of the Revolutionary leaders was at its best. In the first place, the seven States which had some sort of title to tracts extending westward to the Mississippi wisely yielded these claims to the nation; and thus was created a single, national domain which could be dealt with in accordance with a consistent policy. In the second place, Congress, as early as 1780, pledged the national Government to dispose of the western lands for the common benefit, and promised that they should be "settled and formed into distinct republican states, which shall become members of the federal union, and have the same rights of sovereignty, freedom, and independence as the other states."

Finally, in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 there was mapped out a scheme of government admirably adapted to the liberty-loving, yet law-abiding, populations of the frontier. It was based on the broad principles of democracy, and it was sufficiently flexible to permit necessary changes as

the scattered settlements developed into organized Territories and then into States. Geographical conditions, as well as racial inheritances, foreordained that the United States should be an expanding, colonizing nation; and it was of vital importance that wholesome precedents of territorial control should be established in the beginning. Louisiana, Florida, the Mexican accessions, Alaska, and even the newer tropical dependencies, owe much to the decisions that were reached in the organizing of the Northwest a century and a quarter ago.

The Northwest Ordinance was remarkable in that it was framed for a territory that had practically no white population and which, in a sense, did not belong to the United States at all. Back in 1768 Sir William Johnson's Treaty of Fort Stanwix had made the Ohio River the boundary between the white and red races of the West. Nobody at the close of the Revolution supposed that this division would be adhered to; the Northwest had not been won for purposes of an Indian reserve. None the less, the arrangements of 1768 were inherited, and the nation considered them binding except in so far as they were modified from time to time by new agreements. The first such

agreement affecting the Northwest was concluded in 1785, through George Rogers Clark and two other commissioners, with the Wyandots, Delawares, Chippewas, and Ottawas. By it the United States acquired title to the southeastern half of the present State of Ohio, with a view to surveying the lands and raising revenue by selling them. Successive treaties during the next thirty years gradually transferred the whole of the Northwest from Indian hands to the new nation.

Officially, the United States recognized the validity of the Indian claims; but the pioneer homeseeker was not so certain to do so. From about 1775 the country south of the Ohio filled rapidly with settlers from Virginia and the Carolinas, so that by 1788 the white population beyond the Blue Ridge was believed to be considerably over one hundred thousand. For a decade the "Indian side," as the north shore was habitually called, was trodden only by occasional hunters, traders, and explorers. But after Clark's victories on the Mississippi and the Wabash, the frontiersmen grew bolder. By 1780 they began to plant camps and cabins on the rich bottom-lands of the Miamis, the Scioto, and the Muskingum; and when they heard that the British claims in

the West had been formally yielded, they assumed that whatever they could take was theirs. With the technicalities of Indian claims they had not much patience. In 1785 Colonel Harmar, commanding at Fort Pitt, sent a deputation down the river to drive the intruders back. But his agents returned with the report that the Virginians and Kentuckians were moving into the forbidden country "by the forties and fifties," and that they gave every evidence of proposing to remain there. Surveyors were forthwith set to work in the "Seven Ranges," as the tract just to the west of the Pennsylvania boundary was called; and Fort Harmar was built at the mouth of the Muskingum to keep the over-ardent settlers back.

The close of the Revolution brought not only a swift revival of emigration to the West but also a remarkable outburst of speculation in western land. March 3, 1786, General Rufus Putnam and some other Continental officers met at the "Bunch of Grapes" Tavern in Boston and decided that it would be to their advantage to exchange for land in the Seven Ranges the paper certificates in which they had been paid for their military services. Accordingly an "Ohio Company" was organized, and Dr. Manasseh Cutler — "preacher, lawyer,

doctor, statesman, scientist, land speculator" — was sent off to New York to push the matter in Congress. The upshot was that Congress authorized the sale of one and a half million acres east of the Scioto to the Ohio Company, and five million acres to a newly organized Scioto Company.

The Scioto Company fell into financial difficulties and, after making an attempt to build up a French colony at Gallipolis, collapsed. But General Putnam and his associates kept their affairs well in hand and succeeded in planting the first legal white settlement in the present State of Ohio. An arduous winter journey brought the first band of forty-eight settlers, led by Putnam himself, to the mouth of the Muskingum on April 7, 1788. Here, in the midst of a great forest dotted with terraces, cones, and other fantastic memorials of the moundbuilders, they erected a blockhouse and surrounded it with cabins. For a touch of the classical, they called the fortification the Campus Martius; to be strictly up to date, they named the town Marietta, after Marie Antoinette, Queen of France. In July the little settlement was honored by being made the residence of the newly arrived Governor of the Territory, General Arthur St. Clair.

Before the close of the year Congress sold one million acres between the two Miamis to Judge Symmes of New Jersey; and three little towns were at once laid out. To one of them a pedantic school-master gave the name *L-os-anti-ville*, "the town opposite the mouth of the Licking." The name may have required too much explanation; at all events, when, in 1790, the Governor transferred the capital thither from Marietta, he rechristened the place Cincinnati, in honor of the famous Revolutionary society to which he belonged.

Land speculators are confirmed optimists. But Putnam, Cutler, Symmes, and their associates were correct in believing that the Ohio country was at the threshold of a period of remarkable development. There was one serious obstacle — the Indians. Repeated expeditions from Kentucky had pushed most of the tribes northward to the headwaters of the Miami, Scioto, and Wabash; and the Treaty of 1785 was supposed to keep them there. But it was futile to expect such an arrangement to prove lasting unless steadily backed up with force. In their squalid villages in the swampy forests of northern Ohio and Indiana the redskins grew sullen and vindictive. As they saw their favorite hunting-grounds slipping from their grasp,

those who had taken part in the cession repented their generosity, while those who had no part in it pronounced it fraudulent and refused to consider themselves bound by it. Swiftly the idea took hold that the oncoming wave must be rolled back before it was too late. "White man shall not plant corn north of the Ohio" became the rallying cry.

Back of this rebelliousness lay a certain amount of British influence. The Treaty of 1783 was signed in as kindly spirit as the circumstances would permit, but its provisions were not carried out in a charitable manner. On account of alleged shortcomings of the United States, the British Government long refused to give up possession of eight or ten fortified posts in the north and west. One of these was Detroit; and the officials stationed there systematically encouraged the hordes of redskins who had congregated about the western end of Lake Erie to make all possible resistance to the American advance. The British no longer had any claim to the territories south of the Lakes, but they wanted to keep their ascendancy over the northwestern Indians, and especially to prevent the rich fur trade from falling into American hands. Ammunition and other supplies were lav-

ished on the restless tribes. The post officials insisted that these were merely the gifts which had regularly been made in times of peace. But they were used with deadly effect against the Ohio frontiersmen; and there can be little doubt that they were intended so to be used.

By 1789 the situation was very serious. Marauding expeditions were growing in frequency; and a scout sent out by Governor St. Clair came back with the report that most of the Indians throughout the entire Northwest had "bad hearts." Washington decided that delay would be dangerous, and the nation forthwith prepared for its first war since independence. Kentucky was asked to furnish a thousand militiamen and Pennsylvania five hundred, and the forces were ordered to come together at Fort Washington, near Cincinnati.

The rendezvous took place in the summer of 1790, and General Josiah Harmar was put in command of a punitive expedition against the Miamis. The recruits were raw, and Harmar was without the experience requisite for such an enterprise. None the less, when the little army, accompanied by three hundred regulars, and dragging three brass field-pieces, marched out of Fort Washington on a fine September day, it created a very good

impression. All went well until the expedition reached the Maumee country. On the site of the present city of Fort Wayne they destroyed a number of Indian huts and burned a quantity of corn. But in a series of scattered encounters the white men were defeated, with a loss of nearly two hundred killed; and Harmar thought it the part of wisdom to retreat. He had gained nothing by the expedition; on the contrary, he had stirred the redskins to fresh aggressions, and his retreating forces were closely followed by bands of merciless raiders.

Washington knew what the effect of this reverse would be. Accordingly he called St. Clair to Philadelphia and ordered him to take personal command of a new expedition, adding a special warning against ambush and surprise. Congress aided by voting two thousand troops for six months, besides two small regiments of regulars. But everything went wrong. Recruiting proved slow; the men who were finally brought together were poor material for an army, being gathered chiefly from the streets and prisons of the seaboard cities; and supplies were shockingly inadequate.

St. Clair was a man of honest intention, but old, broken in health, and of very limited military

ability; and when finally, October 4, 1791, he led his untrained forces slowly northwards from Fort Washington, he utterly failed to take measures either to keep his movements secret or to protect his men against sudden attack. The army trudged slowly through the deep forests, chopping out its own road, and rarely advancing more than five or six miles a day. The weather was favorable and game was abundant, but discontent was rife and desertions became daily occurrences. As most of the men had no taste for Indian warfare and as their pay was but two dollars a month, not all the commander's threats and entreaties could hold them in order.

On the night of the 3d of November the little army — now reduced to fourteen hundred men — camped, with divisions carelessly scattered, on the eastern fork of the Wabash, about a hundred miles north of Cincinnati and near the Indiana border. The next morning, when preparations were being made for a forced march against some Indian villages near by, a horde of redskins burst unexpectedly upon the bewildered troops, surrounded them, and threatened them with utter destruction. A brave stand was made, but there was little chance of victory. "After the first on-

set," as Roosevelt has described the battle, "the Indians fought in silence, no sound coming from them save the incessant rattle of their fire, as they crept from log to log, from tree to tree, ever closer and closer. The soldiers stood in close order, in the open; their musketry and artillery fire made a tremendous noise, but did little damage to a foe they could hardly see. Now and then through the hanging smoke terrible figures flitted, painted black and red, the feathers of the hawk and eagle braided in their long scalp-locks; but save for these glimpses, the soldiers knew the presence of their somber enemy only from the fearful rapidity with which their comrades fell dead and wounded in the ranks."

At last, in desperation St. Clair ordered his men to break through the deadly cordon and save themselves as best they could. The Indians kept up a hot pursuit for a distance of four miles. Then, surfeited with slaughter, they turned to plunder the abandoned camp; otherwise there would have been escape for few. As it was, almost half of the men in the engagement were killed, and less than five hundred got off with no injury. The survivors gradually straggled into the river settlements, starving and disheartened.

The page on which is written the story of St. Clair's defeat is one of the gloomiest in the history of the West. Harmar's disaster was dwarfed; not since Braddock and his regulars were cut to pieces by an unseen foe on the road to Fort Duquesne had the redskins inflicted upon their hereditary enemy a blow of such proportions. It was with a heavy heart that the Governor dispatched a messenger to Philadelphia with the news. Congress ordered an investigation; and in view of the unhappy general's high character and his courageous, though blundering, conduct during the late campaign, he was exonerated. He retained the governorship, but prudently resigned his military command.

The situation was now desperate. Everywhere the forests resounded with the exultant cries of the victors, while the British from Detroit and other posts actively encouraged the belief not only that they would furnish all necessary aid but that England herself was about to declare war on the United States. Eventually a British force from Detroit actually invaded the disputed country and built a stockade (Fort Miami) near the site of the present city of Toledo, with a view to giving the redskins convincing evidence of the seriousness

of the Great White Father's intentions. Small wonder that, when St. Clair sought to obtain by diplomacy the settlement which he had failed to secure by arms, his commissioners were met with the ultimatum: "*Brothers*, we shall be persuaded that you mean to do us justice, if you agree that the Ohio shall remain the boundary line between us. If you will not consent thereto, our meeting will be altogether unnecessary."

It is said that Washington's first choice for the new western command was "Light-Horse Harry" Lee. But considerations of rank made the appointment inexpedient, and "Mad Anthony" Wayne was named instead. Wayne was the son of a Pennsylvania frontiersman and came honestly by his aptitude for Indian fighting. In early life he was a surveyor, and in the Revolution he won distinction as a dashing commander of Pennsylvania troops at Ticonderoga, Brandywine, Germantown, Stony Point, and other important engagements. Finally he obtained a major-general's commission in Greene's campaign in Georgia, and at the close of the war he settled in that State as a planter. His vanity -- displayed chiefly in a love of fine clothes -- brought upon him a good deal of criticism; and Washington, who in a Cabinet

meeting characterized him as "brave and nothing else," was frankly apprehensive lest in the present business Wayne's impetuosity should lead to fresh disaster. Yet the qualities that on a dozen occasions had enabled Wayne to snatch success from almost certain defeat — alertness, decisiveness, bravery, and sheer love of hard fighting — were those now chiefly in demand.

The first task was to create an army. A few regulars were available; but most of the three or four thousand men who were needed had to be gathered wheresoever they could be found. A call for recruits brought together at Pittsburgh, in the summer of 1792, a nondescript lot of beggars, criminals, and other cast-offs of the eastern cities, no better and no worse than the adventurers who had taken service under St. Clair. Few knew anything of warfare, and on one occasion a mere report of Indians in the vicinity caused a third of the sentinels to desert their posts. But, as rigid discipline was enforced and drilling was carried on for eight and ten hours a day, by spring the survivors formed a very respectable body of troops. The scene of operations was then transferred to Fort Washington, where fresh recruits were started on a similar course of development. Profit-

ing by the experience of his predecessors, Wayne insisted that campaigning should begin only after the troops were thoroughly prepared; and no drill-master ever worked harder to get his charges into condition for action. Going beyond the ordinary manual of arms, he taught the men to load their rifles while running at full speed, and to yell at the top of their voices while making a bayonet attack.

In October, 1793, the intrepid Major-General advanced with twenty-six hundred men into the nearer stretches of the Indian country, in order to be in a position for an advantageous spring campaign. They built Fort Greenville, eighty miles north of Cincinnati, and there spent the winter, while, on St. Clair's fatal battle-field, an advance detachment built a post which they hopefully christened Fort Recovery. Throughout the winter unending drill was kept up; and when, in June, 1794, fourteen hundred mounted militia arrived from Kentucky, Wayne found himself at the head of the largest and best-trained force that had ever been turned against the Indians west of the Alleghanies. Even before the arrival of the Kentuckians, it proved its worth by defending its forest headquarters, with practically

no loss, against an attack by fifteen hundred redskins.

On the 27th of July the army moved forward in the direction of the Maumee, with closed ranks and so guarded by scouts that no chance whatever was given for surprise attacks. Washington's admonitions had been taken to heart, and the Indians could only wonder and admire. News of the army's advance traveled ahead and struck terror through the northern villages, so that many of the inhabitants fled precipitately. When the troops reached the cultivated lands about the junction of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers, they found only deserted huts and great fields of corn, from which they joyfully replenished their diminished stores. Here a fort was built and given the significant name Defiance; and from it a final offer of peace was sent out to the hostile tribes. Never doubting that the British would furnish all necessary aid, the chieftains returned evasive answers. Wayne thereupon moved his troops to the left bank of the Maumee and proceeded cautiously downstream toward the British stronghold at Fort Miami.

A few days brought the army to a place known as Fallen Timbers, where a tornado had piled the

trunks and branches of mighty trees in indescribable confusion. The British post was but five or six miles distant; and there behind the breast-works which nature had provided, and in easy reach of their allies, the Indians chose to make their stand. On the morning of the 20th of August, Wayne, now so crippled by gout that he had to be lifted into his saddle, gallantly led an assault. The Indian fire was murderous, and a battalion of mounted Kentuckians was at first hurled back. But the front line of infantry rushed up and dislodged the savages from their covert, while the regular cavalry on the right charged the enemy's left flank. Before the second line of infantry could get into action the day was won. The whole engagement lasted less than three-quarters of an hour, and not a third of Wayne's three thousand men actually took part in it.

The fleeing redskins were pursued to the walls of the British fort, and even there many were slain. The British soldiery not only utterly failed to come to the relief of their hard-pressed allies, but refused to open the gates to give them shelter. The American loss was thirty-three killed and one hundred wounded. But the victory was the most decisive as yet gained over the Indians

of the Northwest. A warfare of forty years was ended in as many minutes.

From the lower Maumee, Wayne marched back to Fort Defiance, and thence to the junction of the St. Mary's and St. Joseph rivers, where he built a fort and gave it the name still borne by the thriving city that grew up around it — Fort Wayne. Everywhere the American soldiers destroyed the ripened crops and burned the villages, while the terrified inhabitants fled. In November the army took up winter quarters at Fort Greenville.

At last the Americans had the upper hand. Their arms were feared; the British promises of help were no longer credited by the Indians; and it was easy for Wayne to convince the tribal representatives who visited him in large numbers during the winter that their true interest was to win the good-will of the United States. In the summer of 1795 there was a general pacification. Delegation after delegation arrived at Fort Greenville, until more than a thousand chiefs and braves were in attendance. The prestige of Wayne was still further increased when the news came that John Jay had negotiated a treaty at London under which the British posts on United States soil were

finally to be given up; and on August 3rd Wayne was able to announce a great treaty wherein the natives ceded all of what is now southern Ohio and southeastern Indiana, and numerous tracts around posts within the Indian country, such as Fort Wayne, Detroit, and Michilimackinac — strategic points on the western waterways. “Elder Brother,” said a Chippewa chief in the course of one of the interminable harangues delivered during the negotiation, “you asked who were the true owners of the land now ceded to the United States. In answer, I tell you, if any nations should call themselves the owners of it, they would be guilty of falsehood; our claim to it is equal; our Elder Brother has conquered it.” The United States duly recognized the Indian title to all lands not expressly ceded and promised the Indians annual subsidies. The terms of the treaty were faithfully observed on both sides, and for fifteen years the pioneer lived and toiled in peace.

Wayne forthwith became a national hero. Returning to Philadelphia in 1796, he was met by a guard of honor, hailed with the ringing of bells and a salute of fifteen guns, and treated to a dazzling display of fireworks. Congress voted its thanks, and Washington, whose fears had long

since vanished, added his congratulations. There was one other service on the frontier for the doughty general to render. The British posts were at last to be surrendered, and Wayne was designated to receive them. By midsummer he was back in the forest country, and in the autumn he took possession of Detroit, amid acclamations of Indians, Americans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen alike. But his work was done. On the return journey he suffered a renewed attack of his old enemy, gout, and at Presqu'isle (Erie) he died. A blockhouse modeled on the defenses which he built during his western campaign marks his first resting-place and bears aloft the flag which he helped plant in the heart of the Continent.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT MIGRATION

WHILE the fate of the Northwest still hung in the balance, emigration from the eastern States became the rage. "Every small farmer whose barren acres were covered with mortgages, whose debts pressed heavily upon him, or whose roving spirit gave him no peace, was eager to sell his homestead for what it would bring and begin life anew on the banks of the Muskingum or the Ohio."¹ Land companies were then just as optimistic and persuasive as they are today, and the attractions of the western country lost nothing in the telling. Pamphlets described the climate as luxurious, the soil as inexhaustible, the rainfall as both abundant and well distributed, the crops as unfailingly bountiful; paid agents went among the people assuring them that a man of push and courage

¹ McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, vol. III, p. 461.

could nowhere be so prosperous and so happy as in the West.

As early as 1787 an observer at Pittsburgh reported that in six weeks he saw fifty flatboats set off for the down-river settlements; in 1788 forty-five hundred emigrants were said to have passed Fort Harmer between February and June. Most of these people were bound for Kentucky or Tennessee. But the census of 1790 gave the population north of the Ohio as 4,280, and after Wayne's victory the proportion of newcomers who fixed their abodes in that part of the country rapidly increased. For a decade Ohio was the favorite goal; and within eight years after the battle at Fallen Timbers this region was ready for admission to the Union as a State. Southern Indiana also filled rapidly.

For a time the westward movement was regarded as of no disadvantage to the seaboard States. It was supposed that the frontier would attract a population of such character as could easily be spared in more settled communities. But it became apparent that the new country did not appeal simply to broken-down farmers, bankrupts, and ne'er-do-wells. Robust and industrious men, with growing families, were drawn off in great

numbers; and public protest was raised against the "plots to drain the East of its best blood." Anti-emigration pamphlets were scattered broadcast, and, after the manner of the day, the leading western enterprises were belabored with much bad verse. A rude cut which gained wide circulation represented a stout, ruddy, well-dressed man on a sleek horse, with a label, "I am going to Ohio," meeting a pale and ghastly skeleton of a man, in rags, on the wreck of what had once been a horse, with the label, "I have been to Ohio."

The streams of migration flowed from many sources. New England contributed heavily. Marietta, Cincinnati, and many other rising river towns received some of the best blood of that remote section. The Western Reserve — a tract bordering on Lake Erie which Connecticut had not ceded to the Federal Government — drew largely from the Nutmeg State. A month before Wayne set out to take possession of Detroit, Moses Cleaveland with a party of fifty Connecticut homeseekers started off to found a settlement in the Reserve; and the town which took its name from the leader was but the first of a score which promptly sprang up in this inviting district. The "Seven Ranges," lying directly south of the Re-

serve, drew emigrants from Pennsylvania, with some from farther south. The Scioto valley attracted chiefly Virginians, who early made Chillicothe their principal center. In the west, and north of the Symmes tract, Kentuckians poured in by the thousands.

Thus in a decade Ohio became a frontier melting-pot. Puritan, Cavalier, Irishman, Scotch-Irishman, German — all were poured into the crucible. Ideals clashed, and differing customs grated harshly. But the product of a hundred years of cross-breeding was a splendid type of citizenship. At the presidential inaugural ceremonies of March 4, 1881, six men chiefly attracted the attention of the crowd: the retiring President, Hayes; the incoming President, Garfield; the Chief-Justice who administered the oath, Waite; the general commanding the army, William T. Sherman; the ex-Secretary of the Treasury, John Sherman; and "the Marshal Ney of America," Lieutenant-General Sheridan. Five of the six were natives of Ohio, and the sixth was a lifelong resident. Men commented on the striking group and rightly remarked that it could have been produced only by a singularly happy blending of the ideas and ideals that form the warp and woof of Americanism.

Amalgamation, however, took time; for there were towering prejudices and antipathies to be overcome. The Yankee scorned the Southerner, who reciprocated with a double measure of dislike. The New England settlers were, as a rule, people of some education; not one of their communities long went without a schoolmaster. They were pious, law-abiding, industrious; their more easy-going neighbors were likely to consider them oversensitive and critical. But the quality that made most impression upon others was their shrewdness in business transactions. They could drive a bargain and could discover loopholes in a contract in a fashion to take the average backwoodsman off his feet. "Yankee trick" became, indeed, a household phrase wherever New Englander and Southerner met. Whether the Yankee talked or kept silent, whether he was generous or parsimonious, he was always under suspicion.

What of the "Long Knives" from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Kentucky who also made the Ohio lands their goal? Of books they knew little; they did not name their settlements in honor of classic heroes. They were not "gentlemen"; many of them, indeed, had sought the West to escape a society in which distinctions of birth and posses-

sions had put them at a disadvantage. They were not so pious as the New Englanders, though they were capable of great religious enthusiasm, and their morals were probably not inferior. Their houses were poorer; their villages were not so well kept; their dress was more uncouth, and their ways rougher. But they were a hardy folk — brave, industrious, hospitable, and generous to a fault.

In the first days of westward migration the favorite gateway into the Ohio Valley was Cumberland Gap, at the southeastern corner of the present State of Kentucky. Thence the Virginians and Carolinians passed easily to the Ohio in the region of Cincinnati or Louisville. Later emigrants from more northern States found other serviceable routes. Until the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, New Englanders reached the West by three main avenues. Some followed the Mohawk and Genesee turnpikes across central New York to Lake Erie. This route led directly, of course, to the Western Reserve. Some traveled along the Catskill turnpike from the Hudson to the headwaters of the Allegheny, and thence descended the Ohio. Still others went by boat from Boston to New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, in order to approach the Ohio by a more southerly course.

The natural outlet from Pennsylvania was the Ohio River. Emigrants from the western parts of the State floated down the Allegheny or Monongahela to the main stream. Those from farther east, including settlers from New Jersey, made the journey overland by one of several well-known roads. The best of these was a turnpike following the line that General Forbes had cut during the French and Indian War from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh by way of Lancaster and Bedford. Baltimore was a favorite point of departure, and from it the route lay almost invariably along a turnpike to Cumberland on the upper Potomac, and thence by the National Road across the mountains to Wheeling. In later days this was the route chiefly taken from Virginia, although more southerly passes through the Blue Ridge were used as outlets to the Great Kanawha, the Big Sandy, and other streams flowing into the Ohio farther down.

Thus the lines of westward travel which in the East spread fan-shape from Maine to Georgia converged on the Ohio; and that stream became, and for half a century remained, the great pathway of empire. Most of the emigrants had to cover long distances in overland travel before they

reached the hospitable waterway; some, especially in earlier times, made the entire journey by land. Hundreds of the very poor went afoot, carrying all their earthly possessions on their backs, or dragging them in rude carts. But the usual conveyance was the canvas-covered wagon — ancestor of the “prairie schooner” of the western plains — drawn over the rough and muddy roads by four, or even six, horses. In this vehicle the emigrants stowed their provisions, household furniture and utensils, agricultural implements, looms, seeds, medicines, and every sort of thing that the prudent householder expected to need, and for which he could find space. Extra horses or oxen sometimes drew an additional load; cattle, and even flocks of sheep, were occasionally driven ahead or behind by some member of the family.

In the years of heaviest migration the highways converging on Pittsburgh and Wheeling were fairly crowded with westward-flowing traffic. As a rule several families, perhaps from the same neighborhood in the old home, traveled together; and in any case the chance acquaintances of the road and of the wayside inns broke the loneliness of the journey. There were wonderful things to be seen, and every day brought novel experiences.

But exposure and illness, dread of Indian attacks, mishaps of every sort, and the awful sense of isolation and of uncertainty of the future, caused many a man's stout heart to quail, and brought anguish unspeakable to brave women. Of such joys and sorrows, however, is a frontier existence compounded; and of the growing thousands who turned their faces toward the setting sun, comparatively few yielded to discouragement and went back East. Those who did so were usually the land speculators and people of weak, irresolute, or shiftless character.

An English traveler, Morris Birkbeck, who passed over the National Road through southwestern Pennsylvania in 1817, was filled with amazement at the number, hardihood, and determination of the emigrants whom he encountered.

Old America seems to be breaking up [he wrote] and moving westward. We are seldom out of sight, as we travel on this grand track, towards the Ohio, of family groups, behind and before us. . . . A small wagon (so light that you might almost carry it, yet strong enough to bear a good load of bedding, utensils and provisions, and a swarm of young citizens — and to sustain marvelous shocks in its passage over these rocky heights) with two small horses; sometimes a cow or two, comprises their all; excepting a little store of hard-earned

cash for the land office of the district; where they may obtain a title for as many acres as they possess half-dollars, being one fourth of the purchase money. The wagon has a tilt, or cover, made of a sheet, or perhaps a blanket. The family are seen before, behind, or within the vehicle, according to the road or the weather, or perhaps the spirits of the party. . . . A cart and single horse frequently affords the means of transfer, sometimes a horse and pack-saddle. Often the back of the poor pilgrim bears all his effects, and his wife follows, naked-footed, bending under the hopes of the family.¹

Arrived at the Ohio, the emigrant either engaged passage on some form of river-craft or set to work to construct with his own hands a vessel that would bear him and his belongings to the promised land. The styles of river-craft that appeared on the Ohio and other western streams in the great era of river migration make a remarkable pageant. There were canoes, pirogues, skiffs, rafts, dugouts, scows, galleys, arks, keelboats, flatboats, barges, "broad-horns," "sneak-boxes," and eventually ocean-going brigs, schooners, and steamboats. The canoe served the early explorer and trader, and even the settler whose possessions had been carried over the Alleghanies on a single packhorse. But after the Revolution the needs of an awakening

¹Quoted in Turner, *Rise of the New West*, pp. 79-80.

empire led to the introduction of new types of craft, built to afford a maximum of capacity and safety on a downward voyage, without regard for the demands of a round trip. The most common of these one-way vessels was the flatboat.

A flatboat trip down the great river was likely to be filled with excitement. The sound of the steam-dredge had never been heard on the western waters, and the stream-bed was as Nature had made it, or rather was continually remaking it. Yearly floods washed out new channels and formed new reefs and sand-bars, while logs and brush borne from the heavily forested banks continually built new obstructions. Consequently the sharpest lookout had to be maintained, and the pilot was both skilful and lucky who completed his trip without permitting his boat to be caught on a "planter" (a log immovably fixed in the river bed), entangled in the branches of overhanging trees, driven on an island, or dashed on the bank at a bend. Navigation by night and on foggy days was hazardous in the extreme and was avoided as far as possible. If all went well, the voyage from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati could be completed in six or eight days; but delays might easily extend the period to a month.

One grave danger has not been mentioned — the Indians. From the moment when the slow-moving flatboat passed beyond the protection of a white settlement, it was liable to be fired on, by day or by night, by redskins; and the better-built boats were so constructed as to be at least partially bullet-proof. Sometimes extra timber was used to give safety; sometimes the cargo was specially placed with that aim in view. The Indians rarely went beyond the water's edge. Their favorite ruse was to cause captive or renegade whites to run along the bank imploring to be saved. When a boat had been decoyed to shore, and perhaps a landing had been made, the savages would pour a murderous fire on the voyagers. This practice became so common that pioneer boats "shunned the whites who hailed them from the shores as they would have shunned the Indians," and as a consequence many whites escaping from the Indians in the interior were refused succor and left to die.

When the flatboat reached its destination, it might find service as a floating store, or even as a schoolhouse. But it was likely to be broken up, so that the materials in it could be used for building purposes. Before sawmills became common, lum-

ber was a precious commodity, and hundreds of pioneer cabins in the Ohio Valley were built partly or wholly of the boards and timbers taken from the flatboats of their owners. Even the "gunnels" were sometimes used in Cincinnati as foundations for houses. In later days the flatboat, if in reasonably good condition, was not unlikely to be sold to persons engaged in trading down the Mississippi. Loaded with grain, flour, meats, and other backwoods products, it would descend to Natchez or New Orleans, where its cargo could be transferred to ocean-going craft. But in any case its end was the same; for it would not have been profitable, even had it been physically possible, to move the heavy, ungainly craft upstream over long distances, in order to keep it continuously in service.

CHAPTER VII

PIONEER DAYS AND WAYS

ARRIVED on the lower Ohio, or one of its tributaries, the pioneer looked out upon a land of remarkable riches. It was not a Mexico or a Peru, with emblazoned palaces and glittering temples, nor yet a California, with gold-flecked sands. It was merely an unending stretch of wooded hills and grassy plains, bedecked with majestic forests and fructifying rivers and lakes. It had no treasures save for the man of courage, industry, and patience; but for such it held home, broad acres, liberty, and the coveted opportunity for social equality and advancement.

The new country has been commonly thought of, and referred to by writers on the history of the West, as a "wilderness"; and offhand, one might suppose that the settlers were obliged literally to hew their way through densely grown vegetation to the spots which they selected for their homes.

In point of fact, there were great areas of upland — not alone in the prairie country of northern Indiana and Illinois, but in the hilly regions within a hundred miles of the Ohio — that were almost treeless. On these unobstructed stretches grasses grew in profusion; and here roamed great herds of herbivorous animal-kind — deer and elk, and also buffalo, “filing in grave procession to drink at the rivers, plunging and snorting among the rapids and quicksands, rolling their huge bulk on the grass, rushing upon each other in hot encounter, like champions under shield.” Along the watercourses ducks, wild geese, cranes, herons, and other fowl sounded their harsh cries; gray squirrels, prairie chickens, and partridges the hunter found at every turn.

Furthermore, the forests, as a rule, were not difficult to penetrate. The trees stood thick, but deer paths, buffalo roads, and Indian trails ramified in all directions, and sometimes were wide enough to allow two or three wagons to advance abreast. Mighty poplars, beeches, sycamores, and “sugars” pushed to great heights in quest of air and sunshine, and often their intertwining branches were locked solidly together by a heavy growth of grape or other vines, producing a canopy which during the

summer months permitted scarcely a ray of sunlight to reach the ground. There was, therefore, a notable absence of undergrowth. When a tree died and decayed, it fell apart piecemeal; it was with difficulty that woodsmen could wrest a giant oak or poplar from its moorings and bring it to the ground, even by severing the trunk completely at the base. Here and there a clean swath was cut through a forest, for perhaps dozens of miles, by a hurricane. This gave opportunity for the growth of a thicket of bushes and small trees, and such spots were equally likely to be the habitations of wild beasts and the hiding-places of warlike bands of redskins.

There were always adventurous pioneers who scorned the settlements and went off with their families to fix their abodes in isolated places. But the average newcomer preferred to find a location in, or reasonably near, a settlement. The choice of a site, whether by a company of immigrants wishing to establish a settlement or by an individual settler, was a matter of much importance. Some thought must be given to facilities for fortification against hostile natives. There must be an adequate supply of drinking-water; and the location of innumerable pioneer dwellings was selected

with reference to free-flowing springs. Pasture land for immediate use was desirable; and of course the soil must be fertile. As a rule, the settler had the alternative of establishing himself on the lowlands along a stream and obtaining ground of the greatest productiveness, with the almost certain prospect of annual attacks of malaria, or of seeking the poorer but more healthful uplands. The attractions of the "bottoms" were frequently irresistible, and the "ague" became a feature of frontier life almost as inevitable as the proverbial "death and taxes."

The site selected, the next task was to clear a few acres of ground where the cabin was to stand. It was highly desirable to have a belt of open land as a protection against Indians and wild beasts; besides, there must be fields cleared for tillage. If the settler had neighbors, he was likely to have their aid in cutting away the densest growth of trees, and in raising into position the heavy timbers which formed the framework and walls of his cabin. Splendid oaks, poplars, and sycamores were cut into convenient lengths, and such as could not be used were rolled into great heaps and burned. Before sawmills were introduced lumber could not be manufactured; afterwards,

it became so plentiful as to have small market value.

Almost without exception the frontier cabins had log walls; and they were rarely of larger size than single lengths would permit. On an average, they were twelve or fourteen feet wide and fifteen or eighteen feet long. Sometimes they were divided into two rooms, with an attic above; frequently there was but one room "downstairs." The logs were notched together at the corners, and the spaces between them were filled with moss or clay or covered with bark. Rafters were affixed to the uppermost logs, and to one another, with wooden pins driven through auger holes. In earliest times the roof was of bark; later on, shingles were used, although nails were long unknown, and the shingles, after being laid in rows, were weighted down with straight logs.

Sometimes there was only an earth floor. But as a rule "puncheons," *i. e.*, thick, rough boards split from logs, were laid crosswise on round logs and were fastened with wooden pins. There was commonly but a single door, which was made also of puncheons and hung on wooden hinges. A favorite device was to construct the door in upper and lower sections, so as to make it possible,

when there came a knock or a call from the outside, to respond without offering easy entrance to an unwelcome visitor. In the days when there was considerable danger of Indian attacks no windows were constructed, for the householder could defend only one aperture. Later, square holes which could be securely barred at night and during cold weather were made to serve as windows. Flat pieces of sandstone, if they could be found, were used in building the great fireplace; otherwise, thick timbers heavily covered with clay were made to serve. In scarcely a cabin was there a trace of iron or glass; the whole could be constructed with only two implements — an ax and an auger.

Occasionally a family carried to its new home some treasured bits of furniture; but the difficulty of transportation was likely to be prohibitive, and as a rule the cabins contained only such pieces of furniture as could be fashioned on the spot. A table was made by mounting a smoothed slab on four posts, set in auger holes. For seats short benches and three-legged stools, constructed after the manner of the tables, were in common use. Cooking utensils, food-supplies, seeds, herbs for medicinal purposes, and all sorts of household

appliances were stowed away on shelves, made by laying clapboards across wooden pins driven into the wall and mounting to the ceiling; although after sawed lumber came into use it was a matter of no great difficulty to construct chests and cupboards. Not infrequently the settler's family slept on bear skins or blankets stretched on the floor. But crude bedsteads were made by erecting a pole with a fork in such a manner that other poles could be supported horizontally in this fork and by crevices in the walls. Split boards served as "slats" on which the bedding was spread. For a long time "straw-ticks" — large cloth bags filled with straw or sometimes dry grass or leaves — were articles of luxury. Iron pots and knives were necessities which the wise householder carried with him from his eastern or southern home. In the West they were hard to obtain. The chief source of supply was the iron-manufacturing districts of Pennsylvania and Virginia, whence the wares were carried to the *entrepôts* of river trade by packhorses. The kitchen outfit of the average newcomer was completed with a few pewter dishes, plates, and spoons. But winter evenings were utilized in whittling out wooden bowls, trenchers, and noggins or cups, while gourds and hard-shelled squashes

were turned to numerous uses. The commonest drinking utensil was a long-handled gourd.

The dress of the pioneer long remained a curious cross between that of the Indians and that of the white people of the older sections. In earlier times the hunting-shirt — made of linsey, coarse nettle-bark linen, buffalo-hair, or even dressed deerskins — was universally worn by the men, together with breeches, leggings, and moccasins. The women and children were dressed in simple garments of linsey. In warm weather they went barefooted; in cold, they wore moccasins or coarse shoes.

Rarely was there lack of food for these pioneer families. The soil was prodigal, and the forests abounded in game. The *pièce de résistance* of the backwoods menu was “hog an’ hominy”; that is to say, pork served with Indian corn which, after being boiled in lye to remove the hulls, had been soaked in clear water and cooked soft. “Johnny cake” and “pone” — two varieties of cornbread — were regularly eaten at breakfast and dinner. The standard dish for supper was cornmeal mush and milk. As cattle were not numerous, the housewife often lacked milk, in which case she fell back on her one never-failing resource —

hominy; or she served the mush with sweetened water, molasses, the gravy of fried meat, or even bear's oil. Tea and coffee were long unknown, and when introduced they were likely to be scorned by the men as "slops" good enough perhaps for women and children. Vegetables the settlers grew in the garden plot which ordinarily adjoined the house, and thrifty families had also a "truck patch" in which they raised pumpkins, squashes, potatoes, beans, melons, and corn for "roasting ears." The forests yielded game, as well as fruits and wild grapes, and honey for sweetening.

The first quality for which the life of the frontier called was untiring industry. It was possible, of course, to eke out an existence by hunting, fishing, petty trading, and garnering the fruits which Nature supplied without man's assistance. And many pioneers in whom the roving instinct was strong went on from year to year in this hand-to-mouth fashion. But the settler who expected to be a real home-builder, to gain some measure of wealth, to give his children a larger opportunity in life, must be prepared to work, to plan, to economize, and to sacrifice. The forests had to be felled; the great logs had to be rolled together and burned; crops of maize, tobacco, oats, and cane

needed to be planted, cultivated, and harvested; live stock to be housed and fed; fences and barns to be built; pork, beef, grain, whiskey, and other products to be prepared for market, and perhaps carried scores of miles to a place of shipment.

All these things had to be done under conditions of exceptional difficulty. The settler never knew what night his place would be raided by marauding redskins, who would be lenient indeed if they merely carried off part of his cattle or burned his barn. Any morning he might peer out of the "port hole" above the cabin door to see skulking figures awaiting their chance. Sickness, too, was a menace and a terror. Picture the horrors of isolation in times of emergency — wife or child suddenly taken desperately ill, and no physician within a hundred miles; husband or son hovering between life and death as the result of injury by a falling tree, a wild beast, a venomous snake, an accidental gun-shot, or the tomahawk of a prowling Indian. Who shall describe the anxiety, the agony, which in some measure must have been the lot of every frontier family? The prosaic illnesses of the flesh were troublesome enough. On account of defective protection for the feet in wet weather, almost everybody had rheumatism; most

settlers in the bottom-lands fell victims to fever and ague at one time or another; even in the hill country few persons wholly escaped malarial disorders. "When this home-building and land-clearing is accomplished," wrote one whose recollections of the frontier were vivid, "a faithful picture would reveal not only the changes that have been wrought, but a host of prematurely broke-down men and women, besides an undue proportion resting peacefully in country graveyards."

The frontiersman's best friend was his trusty rifle. With it he defended his cabin and his crops from marauders, waged warfare on hostile redskins, and obtained the game which formed an indispensable part of his food supply. At first the gun chiefly used on the border was the smooth-bored musket. But toward the close of the eighteenth century a gunsmith named Deckhard, living at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, began making flintlock rifles of small bore, and in a short time the "Deckhard rifle" was to be found in the hands of almost every backwoodsman. The barrel was heavy and from three feet to three feet and a half in length, so that the piece, when set on the ground, reached at least to the huntsman's shoulder. The bore was cut with twisting grooves, and was so

small that seventy bullets were required to weigh a pound. In loading, a greased linen "patch" was wrapped around the bullet; and only a small charge of powder was needed. The gun was heavy to carry and difficult to hold steadily upon a target; but it was economical of ammunition, and in the hands of the strong-muscled, keen-eyed, iron-nerved frontiersman it was an exceedingly accurate weapon, at all events within the ordinary limits of forest ranges. He was a poor marksman who could not shoot running deer or elk at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards, and kill ducks and geese on the wing; and "boys of twelve hung their heads in shame if detected in hitting a squirrel in any other part of the body than its head."

Life on the frontier was filled with hard work, danger, and anxiety. Yet it had its lighter side, and, indeed, it may be doubted whether people anywhere relished sport more keenly or found more pleasure in their everyday pursuits. The occasional family without neighbors was likely to suffer from loneliness. But few of the settlers were thus cut off, and as a rule community life was not only physically possible but highly developed. Many were the opportunities that served to bring together the frontiersmen, with their families,

throughout a settlement or county. Foremost among such occasions were the log-rollings.

After a settler had felled the thick-growing trees on a plot which he desired to prepare for cultivation, he cut them, either by sawing or by burning, into logs twelve or fifteen feet in length. Frequently these were three, four, or even five feet in diameter, so that they could not be moved by one man, even with a team of horses. In such a situation, the settler would send word to his neighbors for miles around that on a given day there would be a log-rolling at his place; and when the day arrived six, or a dozen, or perhaps a score, of sturdy men, with teams of horses and yokes of oxen, and very likely accompanied by members of their families, would arrive on the scene with merry shouts of anticipation. By means of hand-spikes and chains drawn by horses or oxen, the great timbers were pushed, rolled, and dragged into heaps, and by nightfall the field lay open and ready for the plough — requiring, at the most, only the burning of the huge piles that had been gathered.

Without loss of time the fires were started; and as darkness came on, the countryside glowed as with the light of a hundred huge torches. The

skies were reddened, and as a mighty oak or poplar log toppled and fell to the ground, showers of sparks lent the scene volcanic splendor. Bats and owls and other dim-eyed creatures of the night flew about in bewilderment, sometimes bumping hard against fences or other objects, sometimes plunging madly into the flames and contributing to the general holocaust. For days the great fires were kept going, until the last remnants of this section of the once imposing forest were consumed; while smoke hung far out over the country, producing an atmospheric effect like that of Indian summer.

Heavy exertion called for generous refreshment, and on these occasions the host could be depended on to provide an abundance of food and drink. The little cabin could hardly be made to accommodate so many guests, even in relays. Accordingly, a long table was constructed with planks and trestles in a shady spot, and at noon — and perhaps again in the evening — the women folk served a meal which at least made up in “staying qualities” what it lacked in variety or delicacy. The principal dish was almost certain to be “pot-pie,” consisting of boiled turkeys, geese, chickens, grouse, veal, or venison, with an abundance of

dumplings. This, with cornbread and milk, met the demands of the occasion; but if the host was able to furnish a cask of rum, his generosity was thoroughly appreciated.

In the autumn, corn-huskings were a favorite form of diversion, especially for the young people; and in the early spring neighbors sometimes came together to make maple sugar. A wedding was an important event and furnished diversion of a different kind. From distances of twenty and thirty miles people came to attend the ceremony, and often the festivities extended over two or three days. Even now there was work to be done; for as a rule the neighbors organized a house-building "bee," and before separating for their homes they constructed a cabin for the newly wedded pair, or at all events brought it sufficiently near completion to be finished by the young husband himself.

Even after a day of heavy toil at log-rolling, the young men and boys bantered one another into foot races, wrestling matches, shooting contests, and other feats of strength or skill. And if a fiddler could be found, the day was sure to end with a "hoe-down" — a dance that "made even the log-walled house tremble." No corn-husking

or wedding was complete without dancing, although members of certain of the more strait-laced religious sects already frowned upon the diversion.

Rough conditions of living made rough men, and we need not be surprised by the testimony of English and American travelers, that the frontier had more than its share of boisterous fun, rowdyism, lawlessness, and crime. The taste for whiskey was universal, and large quantities were manufactured in rude stills, not only for shipment down the Mississippi, but for local consumption. Frequenters of the river-town taverns called for their favorite brands — "Race Horse," "Moral Suasion," "Vox Populi," "Pig and Whistle," or "Split Ticket," as the case might be. But the average frontiersman cared little for the niceties of color or flavor so long as his liquor was cheap and produced the desired effect. Hard work and a monotonous diet made him continually thirsty; and while ordinarily he drank only water and milk at home, at the taverns and at social gatherings he often succumbed to potations which left him in happy drunken forgetfulness of daily hardships. House-raising and weddings often became orgies marked by quarreling and fighting

and terminating in brutal and bloody brawls. Foreign visitors to the back country were led to comment frequently on the number of men who had lost an eye or an ear, or had been otherwise maimed in these rough-and-tumble contests.

The great majority of the frontiersmen, however, were sober, industrious, and law-abiding folk; and they were by no means beyond the pale of religion. On account of the numbers of Scotch-Irish, Presbyterianism was in earlier days the principal creed, although there were many Catholics and adherents of the Reformed Dutch and German churches, and even a few Episcopalians. About the beginning of the nineteenth century sectarian ascendancy passed to the Methodists and Baptists, whose ranks were rapidly recruited by means of one of the most curious and characteristic of backwoods institutions, the camp-meeting "revival." The years 1799 and 1800 brought the first of the several great waves of religious excitement by which the West — especially Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee — was periodically swept until within the memory of men still living.

Camp-meetings were usually planned and managed by Methodist circuit-riders or Baptist itiner-

ant preachers, who hesitated not to carry their work into the remotest and most dangerous parts of the back country. When the news went abroad that such a meeting was to take place, people flocked to the scene from far and near, in wagons, on horseback, and on foot. Pious men and women came for the sake of religious fellowship and inspiration; others not so pious came from motives of curiosity, or even to share in the rough sport for which the scoffers always found opportunity. The meeting lasted days, and even weeks; and preaching, praying, singing, "testifying," and "exhorting" went on almost without intermission. "The preachers became frantic in their exhortations; men, women, and children, falling as if in catalepsy, were laid out in rows. Shouts, incoherent singing, sometimes barking as of an unreasoning beast, rent the air. Convulsive leaps and dancing were common; so, too, 'jerking,' stakes being driven into the ground to jerk by, the subjects of the fit grasping them as they writhed and grimaced in their contortions. The world, indeed, seemed demented."¹ Whole communities sometimes professed conversion; and it was considered a particularly good day's work

¹ Hosmer, *Short History of the Mississippi Valley*, p. 116.

when notorious disbelievers or wrong-doers — “hard bats,” in the phraseology of the frontier — or gangs of young rowdies whose only object in coming was to commit acts of deviltry, succumbed to the peculiarly compelling influences of the occasion.

In this sort of religion there was, of course, much wild emotionalism and sheer hysteria; and there were always people to whom it was repellent. Backsliders were numerous, and the person who “fell from grace” was more than likely to revert to his earlier wickedness in its grossest forms. None the less, in a rough, unlearned, and materialistic society such spiritual shakings-up were bound to yield much permanent good. Most western people, at one time or another, came under the influence of the Methodist and Baptist revivals; and from the men and women who were drawn by them to a new and larger view of life were recruited the hundreds of little congregations whose meeting-houses in the course of time dotted the hills and plains from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi. As for the hard-working, honest-minded frontier preachers who braved every sort of danger in the performance of their great task, the West owes them an eternal debt of gratitude. In the

words of Roosevelt, "their prejudices and narrow dislikes, their raw vanity and sullen distrust of all who were better schooled than they, count for little when weighed against their intense earnestness and heroic self-sacrifice."

Nor was education neglected. Many of the settlers, especially those who came from the South, were illiterate. But all who made any pretense of respectability were desirous of giving their children an opportunity to learn to read and write. Accordingly, wherever half a dozen families lived reasonably close together, a log schoolhouse was sure to be found. In the days before public funds existed for the support of education the teachers were paid directly, and usually in produce, by the patrons. Sometimes a wandering pedagogue would find his way into a community and, being engaged to give instruction for two or three months during the winter, would "board around" among the residents and take such additional pay as he could get. More often, some one of the settlers who was fortunate enough to possess the rudiments of an education undertook the rôle of schoolmaster in the interval between the autumn corn-gathering and the spring ploughing and planting.

Instruction rarely extended beyond the three R's;

but occasionally a newcomer who had somewhere picked up a smattering of algebra, Latin, or astronomy stirred the wonder, if not also the suspicion, of the neighborhood. Schoolbooks were few and costly; crude slates were made from pieces of shale; pencils were fashioned from varicolored soapstone found in the beds of small streams. No frontier picture is more familiar or more pleasing than that of the farmer's boy sitting or lying on the floor during the long winter evening industriously tracing by firelight or by candlelight the proverb or quotation assigned him as an exercise in penmanship, or wrestling with the intricacies of least common denominators and highest common divisors. It is in such a setting that we get our first glimpse of the greatest of western Americans, Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER VIII

TECUMSEH

WAYNE's victory in 1795, followed by the Treaty of Fort Greenville, gave the Northwest welcome relief from Indian warfare, and within four years the Territory was ready to be advanced to the second of the three grades of government provided for it in the Ordinance of 1787. A Legislature was set up at Cincinnati, and in due time it proceeded to the election of a delegate to Congress. Choice fell on a young man whose name was destined to a permanent place in the country's history. William Henry Harrison was the son of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the scion of one of Virginia's most honored families. Entering the army in 1791, he had served as an aide-de-camp to Wayne in the campaign which ended at Fallen Timbers, and at the time of his election was acting as Secretary of the Territory and *ex-officio* Lieutenant-Governor.

Although but twenty-six years of age, and without a vote in the House of Representatives, Harrison succeeded in procuring from Congress in 1800 an act dividing the Territory into two distinct "governments," separated by the old Greenville treaty line as far as Fort Recovery and then by a line running due north to the Canadian boundary. The division to the east was named Ohio, that to the west Indiana; and Harrison was made Governor of the latter, with his residence at Vincennes. In 1802 the development of the back country was freshly emphasized by the admission of Ohio as a State.

Meanwhile the equilibrium between the white man and the red again became unstable. In the Treaty of 1795 the natives had ceded only southern Ohio, southeastern Indiana, and a few other small and scattered areas. Northward and westward, their country stretched to the Lakes and the Mississippi, unbroken except by military posts and widely scattered settlements; and title to all of this territory had been solemnly guaranteed. As late as 1800 the white population of what is now Indiana was practically confined to Clark's Grant, near the falls of the Ohio, and a small region around Vincennes. It numbered not more than twenty-

five hundred persons. But thereafter immigration from the seaboard States, and from the nearer lands of Kentucky and Tennessee, set in on a new scale. By 1810 Indiana had a white population of twenty-five thousand, and the cabins of the energetic settlers dotted river valleys and hillsides never before trodden by white man.

In this new rush of pioneers the rights of the Indians received scant consideration. Hardy and well-armed Virginians and Kentuckians broke across treaty boundaries and possessed themselves of fertile lands to which they had no valid claim. White hunters trespassed far and wide on Indian territory, until by 1810 great regions, which a quarter of a century earlier abounded in deer, bear, and buffalo, were made as useless for Indian purposes as barren wastes. Although entitled to the protection of law in his person and property, the native was cheated and overawed at every turn; he might even be murdered with impunity. Abraham Lincoln's uncle thought it a virtuous act to shoot an Indian on sight, and the majority of pioneers agreed with him.

"I can tell at once," wrote Harrison in 1801, "upon looking at an Indian whom I may chance to meet whether he belongs to a neighboring or a more

distant tribe. The latter is generally well-clothed, healthy, and vigorous; the former half-naked, filthy, and enfeebled by intoxication, and many of them without arms excepting a knife, which they carry for the most villainous purposes." The stronger tribes perceived quite as clearly as did the Governor the ruinous effects of contact between the two peoples, and the steady destruction of the border warriors became a leading cause of discontent. Congress had passed laws intended to prevent the sale of spirituous liquors to the natives, but the courts had construed these measures to be operative only outside the bounds of States and organized Territories, and in the great unorganized Northwest the laws were not heeded, and the ruinous traffic went on uninterrupted. Harrison reported that when there were only six hundred warriors on the Wabash the annual consumption of whiskey there was six thousand gallons, and that killing each other in drunken brawls had "become so customary that it was no longer thought criminal."

Most exasperating, however, from the red man's point of view was the insatiable demand of the newcomers for land. In the years 1803, 1804, and 1805 Harrison made treaties with the remnants of the Miami, Eel River, Piankeshaw, and Delaware

tribes — characterized by him as “a body of the most depraved wretches on earth” — which gained for the settlers a strip of territory fifty miles wide south of White River; and in 1809 he similarly acquired, by the Treaty of Fort Wayne, three million acres, in tracts which cut into the heart of the Indian country for almost a hundred miles up both banks of the Wabash. The Wabash valley was richer in game than any other region south of Lake Michigan, and its loss was keenly felt by the Indians. Indeed, it was mainly the cession of 1809 that brought once more to a crisis the long-brewing difficulties with the Indians.

About the year 1768 the Creek squaw of a Shawnee warrior gave birth at one time to three boys, in the vicinity of the present city of Springfield, Ohio.¹ One of the three barely left his name in aboriginal annals. A second, known as Laulewasikaw, “the man with the loud voice,” poses in the pages of history as “the prophet.” The third brother was Tecumseh, “the wild-cat that leaps upon its prey,” or “the shooting star,” as the

¹ Authorities differ as to the facts of Tecumseh's birth. His earliest biographer, Benjamin Drake, holds that he was “wholly a Shawanoe” and that he was a fourth child, the Prophet and another son being twins. William Henry Harrison spoke of Tecumseh's mother as a Creek.

name has been translated. He is described as a tall, handsome warrior — daring and energetic, of fluent and persuasive speech, given to deep reflection, an implacable hater of the white man. Other qualities he possessed which were not so common among his people. He had perfect self-command, a keen insight into human motives and purposes, and an exceptional capacity to frame plans and organize men to carry them out. His crowning scheme for bringing together the tribes of the Middle West into a grand democratic confederacy to regulate land cessions and other dealings with the whites stamps him as perhaps the most statesmanlike member of his race.

While yet hardly more than a boy, Tecumseh seems to have been stirred to deep indignation by the persistent encroachment of the whites upon the hunting-grounds of his fathers. The cessions of 1804 and 1805 he specially resented, and it is not unlikely that they clinched the decision of the young warrior to take up the task which Pontiac had left unfinished. At all events, the plan was soon well in hand. A less far-seeing leader would have been content to call the scattered tribes to a momentary alliance with a view to a general uprising against the invaders. But Tecumseh's pur-

poses ran far deeper. All of the Indian peoples, of whatever name or relationships, from the Lakes to the Gulf and from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, were to be organized in a single, permanent confederacy. This union, furthermore, was to consist, not of chieftains, but of the warriors; and its governing body was to be a warriors' congress, an organ of genuine popular rule. Joint ownership of all Indian lands was to be assumed by the confederacy, and the piecemeal cession of territory by petty tribal chiefs, under pressure of government agents, was to be made impossible. Only thus, Tecumseh argued, could the red man hope to hold his own in the uneven contest that was going on.

The plan was brilliant, even though impracticable. Naturally, it did not appeal instantly to the chieftains, for it took away tribal independence and undermined the chieftain's authority. Besides, its author was not a chief, and had no sanction of birth or office. Its success was dependent on the building of an intertribal association such as Indian history had never known. And while there was nothing in it which contravened the professed policy of the United States, it ran counter to the irrepressible tendency of the advancing white

population to spread at will over the great western domain.

By these obstacles Tecumseh was not deterred. With indefatigable zeal he traveled from one end of the country to the other, arguing with chiefs, making fervid speeches to assembled warriors, and in every possible manner impressing his people with his great idea. The Prophet went with him; and when the orator's logic failed to carry conviction, the medicine-man's imprecations were relied upon to save the day. Events, too, played into their hands. The *Leopard-Chesapeake* affair,¹ in 1807, roused strong feeling in the West and prompted the Governor-General of Canada to begin intrigues looking to an alliance with the redskins in the event of war. And when, late in the same year, Governor Hull of Michigan Territory indiscreetly negotiated a new land cession at Detroit, the northern tribes at once joined Tecumseh's league, muttering threats to slay the chiefs by whom the cession had been sanctioned.

In the spring of 1808 Tecumseh and his brother carried their plans forward another step by taking up their residence at a point in central Indiana

¹ See *Jefferson and his Colleagues*, by Allen Johnson (in *The Chronicles of America*).

where Tippecanoe Creek flows into the Wabash River. The place — which soon got the name of the Prophet's Town — was almost equidistant from Vincennes, Fort Wayne, and Fort Dearborn; from it the warriors could paddle their canoes to any part of the Ohio or the Mississippi, and with only a short portage, to the waters of the Maumee and the Great Lakes. The situation was, therefore, strategic. A village was laid out, and the population was soon numbered by the hundred. Live stock was acquired, agriculture was begun, the use of whiskey was prohibited, and every indication was afforded of peaceful intent.

Seasoned frontiersmen, however, were suspicious. Reports came in that the Tippecanoe villagers engaged daily in warlike exercises; rumor had it that emissaries of the Prophet were busily stirring the tribes, far and near, to rebellion. Governor Harrison was not a man to be easily frightened, but he became apprehensive, and proposed to satisfy himself by calling Tecumseh into conference.

The interview took place at Vincennes, and was extended over a period of two weeks. There was a show of firmness, yet of good will, on both sides. The Governor counseled peace, orderliness, and industry; the warrior guest professed a desire to

be a friend to the United States, but said frankly that if the country continued to deal with the tribes singly in the purchase of land he would be obliged to ally himself with Great Britain. To Harrison's admonition that the redskins should leave off drinking whiskey — "that it was not made for them, but for the white people, who alone knew how to use it" — the visitor replied pointedly by asking that the sale of liquor be stopped.

Notwithstanding the tenseness of the situation, Harrison negotiated the land cessions of 1809, which cost the Indians their last valuable hunting-grounds in Indiana. The powerful Wyandots promptly joined Tecumseh's league, and war was made inevitable. Delay followed only because the Government at Washington postponed the military occupation of the new purchase, and because the British authorities in Canada, desiring Tecumseh's confederacy to attain its maximum strength before the test came, urged the redskins to wait.

For two more years — while Great Britain and the United States hovered on the brink of war — preparations continued. Tribe after tribe in Indiana and Illinois elected Tecumseh as their chief, alliances reached to regions as remote as Florida. In 1810 another conference took place at

Vincennes; and this time, notwithstanding Harrison's request that not more than thirty redskins should attend, four hundred came in Tecumseh's train, fully armed.

A large portico in front of the Governor's house [says a contemporary account] had been prepared for the purpose with seats, as well for the Indians as for the citizens who were expected to attend. When Tecumseh came from his camp, with about forty of his warriors, he stood off, and on being invited by the Governor, through an interpreter, to take his seat, refused, observing that he wished the council to be held under the shade of some trees in front of the house. When it was objected that it would be troublesome to remove the seats, he replied that "it would only be necessary to remove those intended for the whites—that the red men were accustomed to sit upon the earth, which was their mother, and that they were always happy to recline upon her bosom."¹

The chieftain's equivocal conduct aroused fresh suspicion, but he was allowed to proceed with the oration which he had come to deliver. Freely rendered, the speech ran, in part, as follows:

I have made myself what I am; and I would that I could make the red people as great as the conceptions of my mind, when I think of the Great Spirit that rules over all. I would not then come to Governor Harrison to ask him to tear the treaty [of 1809]; but I would say to him,

¹ James Hall, *Memoir of William Henry Harrison*, pp. 113-114.

Brother, you have liberty to return to your own country. Once there was no white man in all this country: then it belonged to red men, children of the same parents, placed on it by the Great Spirit to keep it, to travel over it, to eat its fruits, and fill it with the same race — once a happy race, but now made miserable by the white people, who are never contented, but always encroaching. They have driven us from the great salt water, forced us over the mountains, and would shortly push us into the lakes — but we are determined to go no further. The only way to stop this evil is for all red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was at first, and should be now — for it never was divided, but belongs to all. . . . Any sale not made by all is not good.

In his reply Harrison declared that the Indians were not one nation, since the Great Spirit had “put six different tongues in their heads,” and argued that the Indiana lands had been in all respects properly bought from their rightful owners. Tecumseh’s blood boiled under this denial of his main contention, and with the cry, “It is false,” he gave a signal to his warriors, who sprang to their feet and seized their war-clubs. For a moment an armed clash was imminent. But Harrison’s cool manner enabled him to remain master of the situation, and a well-directed rebuke sent the chieftain and his followers to their quarters.

On the following morning Tecumseh apologized for his impetuosity and asked that the conference be renewed. The request was granted, and again the forest leader pressed for an abandonment of the policy of purchasing land from the separate tribes. Harrison told him that the question was for the President, rather than for him, to decide. "As the great chief is to determine the matter," responded the visitor grimly, "I hope the Great Spirit will put sense enough into his head to induce him to direct you to give up this land. It is true he is so far off he will not be injured by the war. He may sit still in his town, and drink his wine, while you and I will have to fight it out."

Still the clash was averted. Once more, in the summer of 1811, Tecumseh appeared at Vincennes, and again the deep issue between the two peoples was threshed out as fruitlessly as before. Announcing his purpose to visit the southern tribes to unite them with those of the North in a peaceful confederacy, the chieftain asked that during his absence all matters be left as they were, and promised that upon his return he would go to see President Madison and "settle everything with him."

Naturally, no pledge of the kind was given, and

no sooner had Tecumseh and twenty of his warriors started southward on their mission to the Creeks than Harrison began preparations to end the menace that had been so long hanging over the western country. Troops were sent to Harrison; and volunteers were called for. As fast as volunteers came in they were sent up to the Wabash to take possession of the new purchase. Reinforcements arrived from Pittsburgh and from Kentucky, and in a short while the Governor was able to bring together at Fort Harrison, near the site of the present city of Terre Haute, twenty-four companies of regulars, militia, and Indians, aggregating about nine hundred well-armed men.

Late in October this army, commanded by Harrison in person, set forth for the destruction of the Tippecanoe rendezvous. On the way stray redskins were encountered, but the advance was not resisted, and to his surprise Harrison was enabled to lead his forces unmolested to within a few hundred yards of the Prophet's headquarters. Emissaries now came saying that the invasion was wholly unexpected, professing peaceful intentions, and asking for a parley. Harrison had no idea that anything could be settled by negotiation, but he preferred to wait until the next day to make an

attack; accordingly he agreed to a council, and the army went into camp for the night on an oak-covered knoll about a mile northwest of the village. No entrenchments were thrown up, but the troops were arranged in a triangle to conform to the contour of the hill, and a hundred sentinels under experienced officers were stationed around the camp-fires. The night was cold, and rain fell at intervals, although at times the moon shone brightly through the flying clouds.

The Governor was well aware of the proneness of the Indians to early morning attacks, so that about four o'clock on the 7th of November he rose to call the men to parade. He had barely pulled on his boots when the forest stillness was broken by the crack of a rifle at the farthest angle of the camp, and instantly the Indian yell, followed by a fusillade, told that a general attack had begun. Before the militiamen could emerge in force from their tents, the sentinel line was broken and the red warriors were pouring into the enclosure. Desperate fighting ensued, and when time for reloading failed, it was rifle butt and bayonet against tomahawk and scalping knife in hand-to-hand combat. For two hours the battle raged in the darkness, and only when daylight came were the troops able to

charge the redskins, dislodge them from behind the trees, and drive them to a safe distance in the neighboring swamp. Sixty-one of Harrison's officers and men were killed or mortally wounded; one hundred and twenty-seven others suffered serious injury. The Governor himself probably owed his life to the circumstance that in the confusion he mounted a bay horse instead of his own white stallion, whose rider was shot early in the contest.

The Indian losses were small, and for twenty-four hours Harrison's forces kept their places, hourly expecting another assault. "Night," wrote one of the men subsequently, "found every man mounting guard, without food, fire, or light and in a drizzling rain. The Indian dogs, during the dark hours, produced frequent alarms by prowling in search of carrion about the sentinels." There being no further sign of hostilities, early on the 8th of November a body of mounted riflemen set out for the Prophet's village, which they found deserted. The place had evidently been abandoned in haste, for nothing — not even a fresh stock of English guns and powder — had been destroyed or carried off. After confiscating much-needed provisions and other valuables, Harrison ordered the village

to be burned. Then, abandoning camp furniture and private baggage to make room in the wagons for the wounded, he set out on the return trip to Vincennes. A company was left at Fort Harrison, and the main force reached the capital on the 18th of November.

Throughout the western country the news of the battle was received with delight, and it was fondly believed that the backbone of Tecumseh's conspiracy was broken. It was even supposed that the indomitable chieftain and his brother would be forthwith surrendered by the Indians to the authorities of the United States. Harrison was acclaimed as a deliverer. The legislatures of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois formally thanked him for his services; and if, as his Federalist enemies charged, he had planned the whole undertaking with a view to promoting his personal fortunes, he ought to have been satisfied with the result. It was the glamour of Tippecanoe that three decades afterwards carried him into the President's chair.

In precipitating a clash while Tecumseh, the master-mind of the fast-growing confederacy, was absent, the Prophet committed a capital blunder. When reproached by his warriors, he declared that all would have gone well but for the fact that on the

night before the battle his squaw had profanely touched the pot in which his magic charms were brewed, so that the spell had been broken! The explanation was not very convincing, and ominous murmurings were heard. Before the end of the year, however, word came to Vincennes that the crafty magician was back at Tippecanoe, that the village had been rebuilt, and that the lives of the white settlers who were pouring into the new purchase were again endangered.

Still more alarming was the news of Tecumseh's return in January, 1812, from a very successful visit to the Creeks, Choctaws, and Cherokees. He began by asking leave to make his long-projected visit to Washington to obtain peace from the President, and he professed deep regret for "the unfortunate transaction that took place between the white people and a few of our young men at our village." To the British agent at Amherstburg he declared that had he been on the spot there would have been no fighting at Tippecanoe. It is reasonable to suppose that in this case there would have been, at all events, no Indian attack; for Tecumseh was thoroughly in sympathy with the British plan, which was to unite and arm the natives, but to prevent a premature outbreak. The chieftain's

presence, however, would hardly have deterred Harrison from carrying out his decision to break up the Tippecanoe stronghold.

The spring of 1812 brought an ominous renewal of depredations. Two settlers were murdered within three miles of Fort Dearborn; an entire family was massacred but five miles from Vincennes; from all directions came reports of other bloody deeds. The frontier was thrown into panic. A general uprising was felt to be impending; even Vincennes was thought to be in danger. "Most of the citizens of this country," reported Harrison, on the 6th of May, "have abandoned their farms, and taken refuge in such temporary forts as they have been able to construct." Scores fled to Kentucky and to even more distant regions.

Tecumseh continued to assert his friendship for his "white brothers" and to treat the battle at Tippecanoe as a matter of no moment. The murders on the frontier he declared to be the work of the Potawatomi, who were not under his control, and for whose conduct he had no excuse. But it was noted that he made no move to follow up his professed purpose to visit Washington in quest of peace, and that he put forth no effort to restrain his over-zealous allies. It was plain enough that he

was simply awaiting a signal from Canada, and that, as the commandant at Fort Wayne tersely reported, if the country should have a war with Great Britain, it must be prepared for an Indian war as well.

CHAPTER IX

THE WAR OF 1812 AND THE NEW WEST

THE spring of 1812 thus found the back country in a turmoil, and it was with a real sense of relief that the settlers became aware of the American declaration of war against Great Britain on the 18th of June. More than once Governor Harrison had asked for authority to raise an army with which to "scour" the Wabash territory. In the fear that such a step would drive the redskins into the arms of the British, the War Department had withheld its consent. Now that the ban was lifted, the people could expect the necessary measures to be taken for their defense. In no part of the country was the war more popular; nowhere did the mass of the able-bodied population show greater eagerness to take the field.

According to official returns, the Westerners were totally unprepared for the contest. There were but five garrisoned posts between the Ohio

and the Canadian frontier. Fort Harrison had fifty men, Fort Wayne eighty-five, Fort Dearborn fifty-three, Fort Mackinac eighty-eight, and Detroit one hundred and twenty — a total force of fewer than four hundred. The entire standing army of the United States numbered but sixty-seven hundred men, and it was obvious that the trans-Alleghany population would be obliged to carry almost alone the burden of their own defense. The task would not be easy; for General Brock, commanding in upper Canada, had at least two thousand regulars and, as soon as hostilities began, was joined by Tecumseh and many hundred redskins.

While the question of the war was still under debate in Congress, President Madison made a requisition on Ohio for twelve hundred militia, and in early summer the Governors of Indiana and Illinois called hundreds of volunteers into service. Leaving their families as far as possible under the protection of stockades or of the towns, the patriots flocked to the mustering-grounds; many, like Cincinnatus of old, deserted the plough in mid-field. Guns and ammunition in sufficient quantity were lacking; even tents and blankets were often wanting. But enthusiasm ran high, and only

capable leadership was needed to make of these frontier forces, once they were properly equipped, a formidable foe.

The story of the leaders and battles of the war in the West has been told in an earlier volume of this series.¹ It will be necessary here merely to call to mind the stages through which this contest passed, as a preliminary to a glimpse of the conditions under which Westerners fought and of the new position into which their section of the country was brought when peace was restored. So far as the regions north of the Ohio were concerned, the war developed two phases. The first began with General William Hull's expedition from Ohio against Fort Malden for the relief of Detroit, and it ended with the humiliating surrender of that important post, together with the forced abandonment of Forts Dearborn and Mackinac, so that the Wabash and Maumee became, for all practical purposes, the country's northern boundary. This was a story of complete and bitter defeat. The second phase began likewise with a disaster — the needless loss of a thousand men on the Raisin River, near Detroit. Yet it succeeded in bringing Wil-

¹ See *The Fight for a Free Sea*, by Ralph D. Paine (in *The Chronicles of America*).

liam Henry Harrison into chief command, and it ended in Commodore Perry's signal victory on Lake Erie and Harrison's equally important defeat of the disheartened British land forces on the banks of the Thames River, north of the Lake. At this Battle of the Thames perished Tecumseh, who in point of fact was the real force behind the British campaigns in the West. Tradition describes him on the eve of the battle telling his comrades that his last day had come, solemnly stripping off his British uniform before going into battle, and arraying himself in the fighting costume of his own people.

For two-thirds of the time, the war went badly for the Westerners, and only at the end did it turn out to be a brilliant success. The reasons for the dreary succession of disasters are not difficult to discover. Foremost among them is the character of the troops and officers. The material from which the regiments were recruited was intrinsically good, but utterly raw and untrained. The men could shoot well; they had great powers of endurance; and they were brave. But there the list of their military virtues ends.

The scheme of military organization relied upon throughout the West was that of the volunteer

militia. In periods of ordinary Indian warfare the system served its purpose fairly well. Under stern necessity, the self-willed, independence-loving backwoodsmen could be brought to act together for a few weeks or months; but they had little systematic training, and their impatience of restraint prevented the building up of any real discipline. There were periodic musters for company or regimental drill. But, as a rule, drill duty was not taken seriously. Numbers of men failed to report; and those who came were likely to give most of their time to horse-races, wrestling-matches, shooting contests — not to mention drinking and brawling — which turned the occasion into mere merrymaking or disorder. The men brought few guns, and when drills were actually held these soldiers in the making contented themselves with parading with cornstalks over their shoulders. “Cornstalk drill” thus became a frontier epithet of derision. It goes without saying that these troops were poorly officered. The captains and colonels were chosen by the men, frequently with more regard for their political affiliations or their general standing in the community than for their capacity as military commanders; nor were the higher officers, appointed by the chief executive of territory,

state, or nation, more likely to be chosen with a view to their military fitness.

So it came about, as Roosevelt has said, that the frontier people of the second generation "had no military training whatever, and though they possessed a skeleton militia organization, they derived no benefit from it, because their officers were worthless, and the men had no idea of practising self-restraint or obeying orders longer than they saw fit."¹ When the War of 1812 began, these backwoods troops were pitted against British regulars who were powerfully supported by Indian allies. The officers of these untrained American troops were, like Hull, pompous, broken-down, political incapables; while to the men themselves may fairly be applied Amos Kendall's disgusted characterization of a Kentucky muster: "The soldiers are under no more restraint than a herd of swine. Reasoning, remonstrating, threatening, and ridiculing their officers, they show their sense of equality and their total want of subordination." Not until the very last of the war, when under Harrison's direction capable and experienced officers drilled them into real soldiers, did these backwoods stalwarts become an effective fighting force.

¹ *Winning of the West*, vol. iv, p. 246.

There were also shortcomings of another sort. None was more exasperating or costly than the lack of means of transportation. Even in Ohio, the oldest and most settled portion of the Northwest, roads were few and poor; elsewhere there were practically none of any kind. But the regions in which the war was carried on were far too sparsely populated to be able to furnish the supplies, even the foodstuffs, needed by the troops; and materials of every sort had to be transported from the East, by river, lake, and wilderness trail. Up and down the great unbroken stretches between the Ohio and the Lakes moved the floundering supply trains in the vain effort to keep up with the armies, or to reach camps or forts in time to avert starvation or disaster. Pack-horses waded knee-deep in mud; wagons were dragged through mire up to their hubs; even empty vehicles sometimes became so embedded that they had to be abandoned, the drivers being glad to get off with their horses alive. Many times a quartermaster, taking advantage of a frost, would send off a convoy of provisions, only to hear of its being swamped by a thaw before reaching its destination. One of the tragedies of the war was the suffering of the troops while waiting for supplies of clothing, tents, medi-

cines, and food which were stuck in swamps or frozen up in rivers or lakes.

Beset with pleurisy, pneumonia, and rheumatism in winter, with fevers in summer, and subject to attack by the Indians at all times, these frontier soldiers led an existence of exceptional hardship. Only the knowledge that they were fighting for their freedom and their homes held them to their task. An interesting sidelight on the conditions under which their work was done is contained in the following extract from a letter written by a volunteer in 1814:

On the second day of our march a courier arrived from General Harrison, ordering the artillery to advance with all possible speed. This was rendered totally impossible by the snow which took place, it being a complete swamp nearly all day. On the evening of the same day news arrived that General Harrison had retreated to Portage River, eighteen miles in the rear of the encampment at the rapids. As many men as could be spared determined to proceed immediately to re-enforce him. . . . At two o'clock the next morning our tents were struck, and in half an hour we were on the road. I will candidly confess that on that day I regretted being a soldier. On that day we marched thirty miles under an incessant rain; and I am afraid you will doubt my veracity when I tell you that in eight miles of the best of the road, it took us over the knees, and often to the middle. The Black Swamp would have been considered

impassable by all but men determined to surmount every difficulty to accomplish the object of their march. In this swamp you lose sight of *terra firma* altogether — the water was about six inches deep on the ice, which was very rotten, often breaking through to the depth of four or five feet. The same night we encamped on very wet ground, but the driest that could be found, the rain still continuing. It was with difficulty we could raise fires; we had no tents; our clothes were wet, no axes, nothing to cook with, and very little to eat. A brigade of pack-horses being near us, we procured from them some flour, killed a hog (there were plenty of *them* along the road); our bread was baked in the ashes, and our pork we broiled on the coals — a sweeter meal I never partook of. When we went to sleep it was on two logs laid close to each other, to keep our bodies from the damp ground. Good God! What a pliant being is man in adversity.¹

The principal theater of war was the Great Lakes and the lands adjacent to them. Prior to the campaign which culminated in Jackson's victory at New Orleans after peace had been signed, the Mississippi Valley had been untrodden by British soldiery. The contest, none the less, came close home to the backwoods populations. Scores of able-bodied men from every important community saw months or years of toilsome service; many failed to return to their homes, or else returned

¹ Dawson, *William H. Harrison*, p. 369.

crippled, weakened, or stricken with fatal diseases; crops were neglected, or had only such care as could be given them by old men and boys; trade languished; Indian depredations wrought further ruin to life and property and kept the people continually in alarm. Until 1814, reports of successive defeats, in both the East and West, had a depressing influence and led to solemn speculation as to whether the back country stood in danger of falling again under British dominion.

It was, therefore, with a very great sense of relief that the West heard in 1815 that peace had been concluded. At a stroke both the British menace and the danger from the Indians were removed; for although the redskins were still numerous and discontented, their spirit of resistance was broken. Never again was there a general uprising against the whites; never again did the Northwest witness even a local Indian war of any degree of seriousness save Black Hawk's Rebellion in 1832. Tecumseh manifestly realized before he made his last stand at the Thames that the cause of his people was forever lost.

For several years the unsettled conditions on the frontiers had restrained any general migration thither from the seaboard States. But within a

few months after the proclamation of peace the tide again set westward, and with an unprecedented force. Men who had suffered in their property or other interests from the war turned to Indiana and Illinois as a promising field in which to rebuild their fortunes. The rapid extinction of Indian titles opened up vast tracts of desirable land, and the conditions of purchase were made so easy that any man of ordinary industry and integrity could meet them. Speculators and promoters industriously advertised the advantages of localities in which they were interested, boomed new towns, and even loaned money to ambitious emigrants.

The upshot was that the population of Indiana grew from twenty-five thousand in 1810 to seventy thousand in 1816, when the State was admitted to the Union. Illinois filled with equal rapidity, and attained statehood only two years later. Then the tide swept irresistibly westward across the Mississippi into the great regions which had been acquired from France in 1803. As late as 1812 the Territory of Missouri, comprising all of the Louisiana Purchase north of the present State of Louisiana, had a population of only twenty-two thousand, including many French and Spanish settlers and traders. But in 1818 it had a popu-

lation of more than sixty thousand, and was asking Congress for legislation under which the most densely inhabited portion should be set off as the State of Missouri. Thus the Old Northwest was not merely losing its frontier character and taking its place in the nation on a footing with the seaboard sections; it was also serving as the open gateway to a newer, vaster, and in some respects richer American back country.

In the main, southern Indiana and Illinois — as well as the trans-Mississippi territory — drew from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and the remoter South. North of the latitude of Indianapolis and St. Louis the lines of migration led chiefly from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. But many of the settlers came, immediately or after only a brief interval, from Europe. The decade following the close of the war was a time of unprecedented emigration from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany to the United States; and while many of the newcomers found homes in the eastern States, where they in a measure offset the depopulation caused by the westward exodus, a very large proportion pressed on across the mountains in quest of the cheap lands in the undeveloped interior. During these years the western country was re-

peatedly visited by European travelers with a view to ascertaining its resources, markets, and other attractions for settlers; and emigration thither was powerfully stimulated by the writings of these observers, as well as by the activities of sundry founders of agricultural colonies.

“These favorable accounts,” wrote Adlard Welby, an Englishman who made a tour of inspection through the West in 1819, “aided by a period of real privation and discontent in Europe, caused emigration to increase ten-fold; and though various reports of unfavorable nature soon circulated, and many who had emigrated actually returned to their native land in disgust, yet still the trading vessels were filled with passengers of all ages and descriptions, full of hope, looking forward to the West as to a land of liberty and delight — a land flowing with milk and honey — a second land of Canaan.”¹

After the dangers from the Indians were overcome, the main obstacle to western development was the lack of means of easy and cheap transportation. The settler found it difficult to reach the region which he had selected for his home. Eastern supplies of salt, iron, hardware, and fabrics and

¹ Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, vol. XII, p. 148.

foodstuffs could be obtained only at great expense. The fast-increasing products of the western farms — maize, wheat, meats, livestock — could be marketed only at a cost which left a slender margin of profit. The experiences of the late war had already proved the need of highways as auxiliaries of national defense. It required a month to carry goods from Baltimore to central Ohio. None the less, even before the War of 1812, hundreds of transportation companies were running four-horse freight wagons between the eastern and western States; and in 1820 more than three thousand wagons — practically all carrying western products — passed back and forth between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, transporting merchandise valued at eighteen million dollars.

Small wonder that western producer and eastern dealer alike became interested in internal improvements; or that under the double stimulus of private and public enterprise Indian trails fast gave way to rough pioneer roadways, and they to carefully planned and durable turnpikes. Long before the War of 1812, Jefferson, Gallatin, Clay, and other statesmen had conceived of a great highway, or series of highways, connecting the seaboard with the interior as the surest and best means of pro-

moting national unity and strength; and, in the act of Congress of 1802 admitting the State of Ohio, a promising beginning had been made by setting aside five per cent of the money received from the sale of public lands in the State for the building of roads extending eastward to the navigable waters of Atlantic streams. In 1808 Secretary Gallatin had presented to Congress a report calling for an outlay on internal improvements of two million dollars of federal money a year for ten years; and in 1811 the Government had entered upon the greatest undertaking of its kind in the history of the country.

This enterprise was the building of the magnificent highway known to the law as the Cumberland Road, but familiar to uncounted emigrants, travelers, and traders — and deeply embedded in the traditions of the Middle States and the West — as the National Road. Starting at Cumberland, Maryland, this great artery of commerce and travel was pushed slowly through the Alleghanies, even in the dark days of the war, and by 1818 it was open for traffic as far west as Wheeling. The method of construction was that which had lately been devised by John McAdam in England, and involved spreading crushed limestone over a care-

fully prepared road-bed in three layers, traffic being permitted for a time over each layer in succession. This "macadamized" surface was curved to permit drainage, and extra precautions were taken in localities where spring freshets were likely to cause damage.

Controversy raged over proposals to extend the road to the farthest West, to provide its upkeep by a system of tolls, and to build similar highways farther north and south. But for a time constitutional and legal difficulties were swept aside and construction continued. Columbus was reached in 1833, Indianapolis about 1840; and the roadway was graded to Vandalia, then the capital of Illinois, and marked out to Jefferson City, Missouri, although it was never completed to the last-mentioned point by federal authority. When one reads that the original cost of construction mounted to \$10,000 a mile in central Pennsylvania, and even \$13,000 a mile in the neighborhood of Wheeling, one's suspicion is aroused that public contracts were not less dubious a hundred years ago than they have been known to be in our own time.

The National Road has long since lost its importance as the great connecting link of East and West. But in its day, especially before 1860, it

was a teeming thoroughfare. Its course was lined with hospitable farmhouses and was dotted with fast-growing villages and towns. Some of the latter which once were nationally famed were left high and dry by later shifts of the lines of traffic, and have quite disappeared from the map. Throughout the spring and summer months there was a steady westward stream of emigrants; hardly a day failed to bring before the observer's eye the creaking canvas-covered wagon of the homeseeker. Singly and in companies they went, ever toward the promised land. Wagon-trains of merchandise from the eastern markets toiled patiently along the way. Speculators, peddlers, and sightseers added to the procession, and in hundreds of farmhouses the women-folk and children gathered in interested groups by the evening fire to hear the chance visitor talk politics or war and retail with equal facility the gossip of the next township and that of Washington or New York. Great stage-coach lines — the National Road Stage Company, the Ohio National Stage Company, and others — advertised the advantages of their services and sought patronage with all the ingenuity of the modern railroad. Taverns and roadhouses of which no trace remains today offered entertainment at any figure,

and of almost any character, that the customer desired. Eastward flowed a steady stream of wagon-trains of flour, tobacco, and pork, with great droves of cattle and hogs to be fattened for the Philadelphia or Baltimore markets.

At almost precisely the same time that the first shovelful of earth was turned for the Cumberland Road, people dwelling on the banks of the upper Ohio were startled by the spectacle of a large boat moving majestically down stream entirely devoid of sail, oar, pole, or any other visible means of propulsion or control. This object of wonderment was the *New Orleans*, the first steamboat to be launched on western waters.

The conquest of the steamboat was speedy and complete. Already in 1819 there were sixty-three such craft on the Ohio, and in 1834 — when the total shipping tonnage of the Atlantic seaboard was 76,064, and of the British Empire 82,696 — the tonnage afloat on the Ohio and Mississippi was 126,278. Vessels regularly ascended the navigable tributaries of the greater streams in quest of cargoes, and while craft of other sorts did not disappear, the great and growing commerce of the river was revolutionized.

In the upbuilding of steamboat navigation

the thriving, bustling, boastful spirit of the West found ample play. Steamboat owners vied with one another in adorning their vessels with bowsprits, figureheads, and all manner of tinsel decorations, and in providing elegant accommodations for passengers; engineers and pilots gloried in speed records and challenged one another to races which ended in some of the most shocking steamboat disasters known to history. The unconscious bombast of an anonymous Cincinnati writer in Timothy Flint's *Western Monthly Review* in 1827 gives us the real flavor of the steamboat business on the threshold of the Jacksonian era:

An Atlantic cit, who talks of us under the name of backwoodsmen, would not believe, that such fairy structures of oriental gorgeousness and splendor as the *Washington*, the *Florida*, the *Walk in the Water*, *The Lady of the Lake*, etc., etc., had ever existed in the imaginative brain of a romancer, much less, that they were actually in existence, rushing down the Mississippi, as on the wings of the wind, or plowing up between the forests, and walking against the mighty current "as things of life," bearing speculators, merchants, dandies, fine ladies, everything real, and everything affected, in the form of humanity, with pianos, and stocks of novels, and cards, and dice, and flirting, and love-making, and drinking, and champagne, and on the deck, perhaps, three hundred fellows, who have seen alligators, and neither fear

whiskey, nor gun-powder. A steamboat, coming from New Orleans, brings to the remotest villages of our streams, and the very doors of the cabins, a little Paris, a section of Broadway, or a slice of Philadelphia, to ferment in the minds of our young people, the innate propensity for fashions and finery. . . . Cincinnati will soon be the centre of the "celestial empire," as the Chinese say; and instead of encountering the storms, the seasickness, and dangers of a passage from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic, whenever the Erie Canal shall be completed, the opulent southern planters will take their families, their dogs and parrots, through a world of forests, from New Orleans to New York, giving us a call by the way. When they are more acquainted with us, their voyage will often terminate here.¹

The new West was frankly materialistic. Yet its interests were by no means restricted to steamboats, turnpikes, crops, exports, and money-making. It concerned itself much with religion. One of the most familiar figures on trail and highway was the circuit-rider, with his Bible and saddlebags; and no community was so remote, or so hardened, as not to be raised occasionally to a frenzy of religious zeal by the crude but terrifying eloquence of the revivalist. For education, likewise, there was a growing regard. Nowhere did the devotion of the Western people to the twin

¹Vol. I, p. 25 (May, 1827).

ideas of democracy and enlightenment find nobler expression than in the clause of the Indiana constitution of 1816 making it the duty of the Legislature to provide for "a general system of education, ascending in a regular gradation from township schools to a state university, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all." This principle found general application throughout the Northwest. By 1830 common schools existed wherever population was sufficient to warrant the expense; academies and other secondary schools were springing up in Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, and many lesser places; state universities existed in Ohio and Indiana; and Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians had begun to dot the country with small colleges. Literature developed slowly. But newspapers appeared almost before there were readers; and that the new society was by no means without cultural, and even æsthetic, aspiration is indicated by the long-continued rivalry of Cincinnati and Lexington, Kentucky, to be known as "the Athens of the West."

CHAPTER X

SECTIONAL CROSS CURRENTS

THE War of 1812 did much in America to stimulate national pride and to foster a sense of unity. None the less, the decade following the Peace of Ghent proved the beginning of a long era in which the point of view in politics, business, and social life was distinctly sectional. New England, the Middle States, the South, the West — all were bent upon getting the utmost advantages from their resources; all were viewing public questions in the light of their peculiar interests. In the days of Clay and Calhoun and Jackson the nation's politics were essentially a struggle for power among the sections.

There was a time when the frontier folk of the trans-Alleghany country from Lakes to Gulf were much alike. New Englanders in the Reserve, Pennsylvanians in central Ohio, Virginians and Carolinians in Kentucky and southern Indiana,

Georgians in Alabama and Mississippi, Kentuckians and Tennesseans in Illinois and Missouri — all were pioneer farmers and stock-raisers, absorbed in the conquest of the wilderness and all thinking, working, and living in much the same way. But by 1820 the situation had altered. The West was still a "section," whose interests and characteristics contrasted sharply with those of New England or the Middle States. Yet upon occasion it could act with very great effect, as for instance when it rallied to the support of Jackson and bore him triumphantly to the presidential chair. Great divergences, however, had grown up within this western area; differences which had existed from the beginning had been brought into sharp relief. Under play of climatic and industrial forces, the West had itself fallen apart into sections.

Foremost was the cleavage between North and South, on a line marked roughly by the Ohio River. Climate, soil, the cotton gin, and slavery combined to make of the southern West a great cotton-raising area, interested in the same things and swayed by the same impulses as the southern seaboard. Similarly, economic conditions combined to make of the northern West a land of small

farmers, free labor, town-building, and diversified manufactures and trade. A very large chapter of American history hinges on this wedging apart of Southwest and Northwest. To this day the two great divisions have never wholly come together in their ways of thinking.

But neither of these western segments was itself entirely a unit. The Northwest, in particular, had been settled by people drawn from every older portion of the country, and as the frontier receded and society took on a more matured aspect, differences of habits and ideas were accentuated rather than obscured. Men can get along very well with one another so long as they live apart and do not try to regulate their everyday affairs on common lines.

The great human streams that poured into the Northwest flowed from two main sources — the nearer South and New England. Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were first peopled by men and women of Southern stock. Some migrated directly from Virginia, the Carolinas, and even Georgia. But most came from Kentucky and Tennessee and represented the second generation of white people in those States, now impelled to move on to a new frontier by the desire for larger and cheaper farms.

Included in this Southern element were many representatives of the well-to-do classes, who were drawn to the new territories by the opportunity for speculation in land and for political preferment, and by the opening which the fast-growing communities afforded for lawyers, doctors, and members of other professions. The number of these would have been larger had there been less rigid restrictions upon slaveholding. It was rather, however, the poorer whites — the more democratic, non-slaveholding Southern element — that formed the bulk of the earlier settlers north of the Ohio.

There was much westward migration from New England before the War of 1812, but only a small share of it reached the Ohio country, and practically none went beyond the Western Reserve. The common goal was western New York. Here again there was some emigration of the well-to-do and influential. But, as in the South, the people who moved were mainly those who were having difficulty in making ends meet and who could see no way of bettering their condition in their old homes. The back country of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and western Massachusetts was filled with people of this sort — poor, discontented, restless, without political influence, and needing

only the incentive of cheap lands in the West to sever the slender ties which bound them to the stony hillsides of New England.

After 1815 New England emigration rose to astonishing proportions, and an increasing number of the homeseekers passed — directly or after a sojourn in the Lower Lake country of New York — into the Northwest. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 made the westward journey easier and cheaper. The routes of travel led to Lakes Ontario and Erie, thence to the Reserve in northern Ohio, thence by natural stages into other portions of northern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and eventually into southern Michigan and Wisconsin. Not until after 1830 did the stalwart homeseekers penetrate north of Detroit; the great stretches of prairie between Lakes Erie and Michigan, and to the south — left quite untouched by Southern pioneers — satisfied every desire of these restless farmers from New England.

For a long time Southerners determined the course of history in the Old Northwest. They occupied the field first, and they had the great advantage of geographical proximity to their old homes. Furthermore, they lived more compactly; the New Englanders were not only spread over

the broader prairie stretches of the north, but scattered to some extent throughout the entire region between the Lakes and the Ohio.¹ But by the middle of the century not only had the score of northern counties been inundated by the "Yankees" but the waves were pushing far into the interior, where they met and mingled with the counter-current. Both Illinois and Indiana became, in a preëminent degree, melting-pots in which was fused by slow and sometimes painful processes an amalgam which Bryce and other keen observers have pronounced the most American thing in America.

¹ In 1820 the population of Indiana was confined almost entirely to the southern third of the State, although the removal of the capital, in 1825, from Corydon to Indianapolis was carried out in the confidence that eventually that point would become the State's populational as it was its geographical center. When, in 1818, Illinois was admitted to the Union its population was computed at 40,000. The figure was probably excessive; at all events, contemporaries testify that so eager were the people for statehood that many were counted twice, and even emigrants were counted as they passed through the Territory. But the census of 1820 showed a population of 55,000, settled almost wholly in the southern third of the State, with narrow tongues of inhabited land stretching up the river valleys toward the north. Two slave States flanked the southern end of the commonwealth; almost half of its area lay south of a westward prolongation of Mason and Dixon's line. Save for a few Pennsylvanians, the people were Southern; the State was for all practical purposes a Southern State. As late as 1833 the Legislature numbered fifty-eight members from the South, nineteen from the Middle States, and only four from New England.

Of the great national issues in the quarter-century following the War of 1812 there were some upon which people of the Northwest, in spite of their differing points of view, could very well agree. Internal improvement was one of these. Roads and canals were necessary outlets to southern and eastern markets, and any reasonable proposal on this subject could be assured of the Northwest's solid support. The thirty-four successive appropriations to 1844 for the Cumberland Road, Calhoun's "Bonus Bill" of 1816, the bill of 1822 authorizing a continuous national jurisdiction over the Cumberland Road, the comprehensive "Survey Bill" of 1824, the Maysville Road Bill of 1830 — all were backed by the united strength of the Northwestern senators and representatives.

So with the tariff. The cry of the East for protection to infant industries was echoed by the struggling manufacturers of Cincinnati, Louisville, and other towns; while a protective tariff as a means of building up the home market for food-stuffs and raw materials seemed to the Westerner an altogether reasonable and necessary expedient. Ohio alone in the Northwest had an opportunity to vote on the protective bill of 1816, and gave its enthusiastic support. Ohio, Indiana,

and Illinois voted unitedly for the bills of 1820, 1824, 1828, and 1832. The principal western champion of the protective policy was Henry Clay, a Kentuckian; but the Northwest supported the policy more consistently than did Clay's own State and section.

On the National Bank the position of the Northwest was no less emphatic. The people were little troubled by the question of constitutionality; but believing that the bank was an engine of tyranny in the hands of an eastern aristocracy, they were fully prepared to support Jackson in his determination to extinguish that "un-American monopoly."

There were other subjects upon which agreement was reached either with difficulty or not at all. One of these was the form of local government which should be adopted. Southerners and New Englanders brought to their new homes widely differing political usages. The former were accustomed to the county as the principal local unit of administration. It was a relatively large division, whose affairs were managed by elective officers, mainly a board of commissioners. The New Englanders, on the other hand, had grown up under the town-meeting system and clung to

the notion that an indispensable feature of democratic local government is the periodic assembling of the citizens of a community for legislative, fiscal, and electoral purposes. The Illinois constitution of 1818 was made by Southerners, and naturally it provided for the county system. But protest from the "Yankee" elements became so strong that in the new constitution of 1848 provision was made for township organization wherever the people of a county wanted it; and this form of government, at first prevalent only in the northern counties, is now found in most of the central and southern counties as well.

The most deeply and continuously dividing issue in the Northwest, as in the nation at large, was negro slavery. Although written by Southern men, the Ordinance of 1787 stipulated that there should be "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." If the government of the Northwest had been one of laws, and not of men, this specific provision would have made the territory free soil and would have relieved the inhabitants from all interest in the "peculiar institution." But the laws never execute them-

selves — least of all in frontier communities. In point of fact, considerable numbers of slaves were held in the territory until the nineteenth century was far advanced. As late as 1830 thirty-two negroes were held in servitude in the single town of Vincennes. Slavery could and did prevail to a limited extent because existing property rights were guaranteed in the Ordinance itself, in the deed of cession by Virginia, in the Jay Treaty of 1794, and in other fundamental acts. The courts of the Northwest held that slave-owners whose property could be brought under any of these guarantees might retain that property; and although no court countenanced further importation, itinerant Southerners — “rich planters traveling in their family carriages, with servants, packs of hunting-dogs, and trains of slaves, their nightly camp-fires lighting up the wilderness where so recently the Indian hunter had held possession” — occasionally settled in southern Indiana or Illinois and with the connivance of the authorities kept some of their dependents in slavery, or quasi-slavery, for decades.

Of actual slaveholders there were not enough to influence public sentiment greatly. But the people of Southern extraction, although neither slave-

holders nor desiring to become such, had no strong moral convictions on the subject. Indeed, they were likely to feel that the anti-slavery restriction imposed an unfortunate impediment in the way of immigration from the South. Hence the persistent demand of citizens of Indiana and Illinois for a relaxation of the drastic prohibition of slavery in the Ordinance of 1787. In 1796 Congress was petitioned from Kaskaskia to extend relief; in 1799 the territorial Legislature was urged to bring about a repeal; in 1802 an Indiana territorial convention at Vincennes memorialized Congress in behalf of a suspension of the proviso for a period of ten years. Not only were violations of the law winked at, but both Indiana and Illinois deliberately built up a system of indenture which partook strongly of the characteristics of slavery. After much controversy, Indiana, in 1816, framed a state constitution which reiterated the language of the Northwest Ordinance, but without invalidating titles to existing slave property; while Illinois was admitted to the Union in 1818 with seven or eight hundred slaves upon her soil, and with a constitution which continued the old system of indenture with slight modification.

In a heated contest in Illinois in 1824 over the

question of calling a state convention to draft a constitution legalizing slavery the people of Northern antecedents made their votes tell and defeated the project. But, like other parts of the Northwest, this State never became a unit on the slavery issue. Certainly it never became abolitionist. By an almost unanimous vote the Legislature, in 1837, adopted joint resolutions which condemned abolitionism as "more productive of evil than of moral and political good"; and in Congress in the preceding year the delegation of the State had given solid support to the "gag resolutions," which were intended to deny a hearing to all petitions on the slavery question.

Throughout the great era of slavery controversy the Northwest was prolific of schemes of compromise, for the constant clash of Northern and Southern elements developed an aptitude for settlement by agreement on moderate lines. The people of the section as a whole long clung to popular, or "squatter," sovereignty as the supremely desirable solution of the slavery question — a device formulated and defended by two of the Northwest's own statesmen, Cass and Douglas, and relinquished only slowly and reluctantly under the leadership, not of a New England abolitionist,

but of a statesman of Southern birth who had come to the conclusion that the nation could not permanently exist half slave and half free.

Cass, Douglas, Lincoln — all were adopted sons of the Northwest, and the career of every one illustrates not only the prodigality with which the back country showered its opportunities upon men of industry and talent, but the play and interplay of sectional and social forces in the building of the newer nation. Cass and Douglas were New Englanders. One was born at Exeter, New Hampshire, in 1782; the other at Brandon, Vermont, in 1813. Lincoln sprang from Virginian and Kentuckian stocks. His father's family moved from Virginia to Kentucky at the close of the Revolution; in 1784 his grandfather was killed by lurking Indians, and his father, then a boy of six, was saved from captivity only by a lucky shot of an older brother. Lincoln himself was born in 1809. Curiously enough, Cass and Douglas, the New Englanders, played their rôles on the national stage as Jackson Democrats, while Lincoln, the Kentuckian of Virginian ancestry, became a Whig and later a Republican.

Cass and Douglas were well-born. Cass's father was a thrifty soldier-farmer who made for his

family a comfortable home at Zanesville, Ohio; Douglas's father was a successful physician. Lincoln was born in obscurity and wretchedness. His father, Thomas Lincoln, was a ne'er-do-well Kentucky carpenter, grossly illiterate, unable or unwilling to rise above the lowest level of existence in the pioneer settlements. His mother, Nancy Hanks, whatever her antecedents may have been, was a woman of character, and apparently of some education. But she died when her son was only nine years of age.

Cass and Douglas had educational opportunities which in their day were exceptional. Both attended famous academies and received instruction in the classics, mathematics, and philosophy. Both grew up in an environment of enlightenment and integrity. Lincoln, on the other hand, got a few weeks of instruction under two amateur teachers in Kentucky and a few months more in Indiana — in all, hardly as much as one year; and as a boy he knew only rough, coarse surroundings. When, in 1816, the restless head of the family moved from Kentucky to southern Indiana, his worldly belongings consisted of a parcel of carpenters' tools and cooking utensils, a little bedding, and about four hundred gallons of whiskey. No one who has

not seen the sordidness, misery, and apparent hopelessness of the life of the "poor whites" even to-day, in the Kentucky and southern Indiana hills, can fully comprehend the chasm which separated the boy Lincoln from every sort of progress and distinction.

All three men prepared for public life by embracing the profession that has always, in this country, proved the surest avenue to preferment — the law. But, whereas Cass arrived at maturity just in time to have an active part in the War of 1812, and in this way to make himself the most logical selection for the governorship of the newly organized Michigan Territory, Douglas saw no military service, and Lincoln only a few weeks of service during the Black Hawk War, and both were obliged to seek fame and fortune along the thorny road of politics. Following admission to the bar at Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1834, Douglas was elected public prosecutor of the first judicial circuit in 1835; elected to the state Legislature in 1836; appointed by President Van Buren registrar of the land office at Springfield in 1837; made a judge of the supreme court of the State in 1841; and elected to the national House of Representatives in 1843. Resourceful, skilled in debate,

intensely patriotic, and favored with many winning personal qualities, he drew to himself men of both Northern and Southern proclivities and became an influential exponent of broad and enduring nationalism.

Meanwhile, after a first defeat, Lincoln was elected to the Illinois Legislature in 1834, and again in 1836. When he gathered all of his worldly belongings in a pair of saddle-bags and fared forth to the new capital, Springfield, to settle himself to the practice of law, he had more than a local reputation for oratorical power; and events were to prove that he had not only facility in debate and familiarity with public questions, but incomparable devotion to lofty principles. In the subsequent unfolding of the careers of Lincoln and Douglas — especially in the turn of events that brought to each a nomination for the presidency by a great party in 1860 — there was no small amount of good luck and sheer accident. But it is equally true that by prodigious effort Kentuckian and Vermonter alike hewed out their own ways to greatness.

It was the glory of the Northwest to offer a competence to the needy, the baffled, the discouraged, the tormented of the eastern States and

of Europe. The bulk of its fast-growing population consisted, it is true, of ordinary folk who could have lived on in fair comfort in the older sections, yet who were ambitious to own more land, to make more money, and to secure larger advantages for their children. But nowhere else was the road for talent so wide open, entirely irrespective of inheritance, possessions, education, environment. Nowhere outside of the trans-Alleghany country would the rise of a Lincoln have been possible.

CHAPTER XI

THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

WHILE the Ohio country — the lower half of the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois — was throwing off its frontier character, the remoter Northwest was still a wilderness frequented only by fur-traders and daring explorers. And that far Northwest by the sources of the Mississippi had been penetrated by few white men since the seventeenth century. The earliest white visitors to the upper Mississippi are not clearly known. They may have been Pierre Radisson and his brother-in-law, Ménard des Grosseilliers, who are alleged to have covered the long portage from Lake Superior to the Mississippi in or about 1665; but the matter rests entirely on how one interprets Radisson's vague account of their western perambulations. At all events, in 1680 — seven years after the descent of the river from the Wisconsin to the Arkansas by Marquette and Joliet —

Louis Hennepin, under instructions from La Salle, explored the stream from the mouth of the Illinois to the Falls of St. Anthony, where the city of Minneapolis now stands, five hundred miles from the true source.

There the matter of exploration rested until the days of Thomas Jefferson, when the purchase of Louisiana lent fresh interest to northwestern geography. In 1805 General James Wilkinson, in military command in the West, dispatched Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike with a party of twenty men from St. Louis to explore the headwaters of the great river, make peace with the Indians, and select sites for fortified posts. From his winter quarters near the Falls, Pike pushed northward over the snow and ice until, early in 1806, he reached Leech Lake, in Cass County, Minnesota, which he wrongly took to be the source of the Father of Waters. It is little wonder that, at a time when the river and lake surfaces were frozen over and the whole country heavily blanketed with snow, he should have found it difficult to disentangle the maze of streams and lakes which fill the low-lying region around the headwaters of the Mississippi, the Red River, and the Lake of the Woods. In 1820 General Cass, Governor of Michigan,

which then had the Mississippi for its western boundary, led an expedition into the same region as far as Cass Lake, where the Indians told him that the true source lay some fifty miles to the northwest. It remained for the traveler and ethnologist Henry Schoolcraft, twelve years later, to discover Lake Itasca, in modern Clearwater County, which occupies a depression near the center of the rock-rimmed basin in which the river takes its rise.

It was not these infrequent explorers, however, who opened paths for pioneers into the remote Northwest, but traders in search of furs and pelts — those commercial pathfinders of western civilization. There is scarcely a town or city in the State of Wisconsin that does not owe its origin, directly or indirectly, to these men. Cheap and tawdry enough were the commodities bartered for these wonderful beaver and otter pelts — ribbons and gewgaws, looking-glasses and combs, blankets and shawls of gaudy color. But scissors and knives, gunpowder and shot, tobacco and whiskey, went also in the traders' packs, though traffic in fire-water was forbidden. These goods, upon arrival at Mackinac, were sent out by canoes and *bateaux* to the different posts, where they were dealt out to the savages directly or were dis-

patched to the winter camps along the far-reaching waterways. "Returning home in the spring, the bucks would set their squaws and children at making maple-sugar or planting corn, watermelons, potatoes, and squash, while they themselves either dawdled their time away or hunted for summer furs. In the autumn, the wild rice was garnered along the sloughs and the river mouths, and the straggling field crops were gathered in — some of the product being hidden in skillfully covered pits, as a reserve, and some dried for transportation in the winter's campaign. The villagers were now ready to depart for their hunting-grounds, often hundreds of miles away. It was then that the trader came and credits were wrangled over and extended, each side endeavoring to get the better of the other."¹

This traffic was largely managed by the British in Canada until 1816, when an act of Congress forbade foreign traders to operate on United States soil. But a heavier blow was inflicted in the establishment of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, which was given a substantial monopoly of Indian commerce. From its headquarters on Mackinac Island this great corporation rapidly

¹ Thwaites, *Story of Wisconsin*, p. 156.

squeezed the clandestine British agents out of the American trade, introduced improved methods, and built up a system which covered the entire fur-bearing Northwest.

Of this remoter Northwest, the region between Lakes Erie and Michigan was the most accessible from the East; yet it was avoided by the first pioneers, who labored under a strange misapprehension about its climate and resources. In spite of the fact that it abounded in rich bottom-lands and fertile prairies and was destined to become one of the most bountiful orchards of the world, it was reported by early prospectors to be swampy and unfit for cultivation. Though Governor Cass did his best to overcome this prejudice, for years settlers preferred to gather mainly about Detroit, leaving the rich interior to fur-traders. When enlightenment eventually came, population poured in with a rush. Detroit — which was a village in 1820 — became ten years later a thriving city of thirty thousand and the western terminus of a steamboat line from Buffalo, which year after year multiplied its traffic. By the year 1837 the great territory lying east of Lake Michigan was ready for statehood.

Almost simultaneously the region to the west

of Lake Michigan began to emerge from the fur-trading stage. The place of the picturesque trader, however, was not taken at once by the prosaic farmer. The next figure in the pageant was the miner. The presence of lead in the stretch of country between the Wisconsin and Illinois rivers was known to the Indians before the coming of the white man, but they began to appreciate its value only after the introduction of firearms by the French. The ore lay at no great depth in the Galena limestone, and the aborigines collected it either by stripping it from the surface or by sinking shallow shafts from which it was hoisted in deerskin bags. Shortly after the War of 1812 American prospectors pushed into the region, and the Government began granting leases on easy terms to operators. In 1823 one of these men arrived with soldiers, supplies, skilled miners, and one hundred and fifty slaves; and thereafter the "diggings" fast became a mecca for miners, smelters, speculators, merchants, gamblers, and get-rich-quick folk of every sort, who swarmed thither by thousands from every part of the United States, especially the South, and even from Europe. "Mushroom towns sprang up all over the district; deep-worn native paths became ore

roads between the burrows and the river-landings; sink-holes abandoned by the Sauk and Foxes, when no longer to be operated with their crude tools, were reopened and found to be exceptionally rich, while new diggings and smelting-furnaces, fitted out with modern appliances, fairly dotted the map of the country.”¹

Galena was the entrepôt of the region. A trail cut thither from Peoria soon became a well-worn coach road; roads were early opened to Chicago and Milwaukee. In 1822 Galena was visited by a Mississippi River steamboat, and a few years later regular steamboat traffic was established. And it was by these roadways and waterways that homeseekers soon began to arrive.

The invasion of the white man, accompanied though it was by treaties, was bitterly resented by the Indian tribes who occupied the Northwest above the Illinois River. These Sioux, Sauk and Foxes, and Winnebagoes, with remnants of other tribes, carried on an intermittent warfare for years, despite the efforts of the Federal Government to define tribal boundaries; and between red men and white men coveting the same lands causes of irrita-

¹ Thwaites, *Story of Wisconsin*, p. 163.

tion were never wanting. In 1827 trouble which had been steadily brewing came to the boiling-point. Predatory expeditions in the north were reported; the Winnebagoes were excited by rumors that another war between the United States and Great Britain was imminent; an incident or even an accident was certain to provoke hostilities. The incident occurred. When Red Bird, a petty Winnebago chieftain dwelling in a "town" on the Black River, was incorrectly informed that two Winnebago braves who had been imprisoned at Prairie du Chien had been executed, he promptly instituted vengeance. A farmer's family in the neighborhood of Prairie du Chien was massacred, and two keel-boats returning down stream from Fort Snelling were attacked, with some loss of life. The settlers hastily repaired the old fort and also dispatched messengers to give the alarm. Galena sent a hundred militiamen; a battalion came down from Fort Snelling; Governor Cass arrived on the spot by way of Green Bay; General Atkinson brought up a full regiment from Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis; and finally Major Whistler proceeded up the Fox with a portion of the troops stationed at Fort Howard, on Green Bay.

When all was in readiness, the Winnebagoes were notified that, unless Red Bird and his principal accomplice, Wekau, were promptly surrendered, the tribe would be exterminated. The threat had its intended effect, and the two culprits duly presented themselves at Whistler's camp on the Fox-Wisconsin portage, in full savage regalia, and singing their war dirges. Red Bird, who was an Indian of magnificent physique and lofty bearing, had but one request to make — that he be not committed to irons — and this request was granted. At Prairie du Chien, whither the two were sent for trial, he had opportunities to escape, but he refused to violate his word by taking advantage of them. Following their trial, the redskins were condemned to be hanged. Unused to captivity, however, Red Bird languished and soon died, while his accomplice was pardoned by President Adams. In 1828 Fort Winnebago was erected on the site of Red Bird's surrender.

The Winnebagoes now agreed to renounce forever their claims to the lead mines. Furthermore, in the same year, the site of the principal Sauk village and burying-ground, on Rock River, three miles south of the present city of Rock Island, was sold by the Government, and the Sauk and Foxes

resident in the vicinity were given notice to leave. Under the Sauk chieftain Keokuk most of the dispossessed warriors withdrew peacefully beyond the Mississippi, and two years later the tribal representatives formally yielded all claims to lands east of that stream. Some members of the tribe, however, established themselves on the high bluff which has since been known as Black Hawk's Watch Tower and defied the Government to remove them.

The leading spirit in this protest was Black Hawk, who though neither born a chief nor elected to that dignity, had long been influential in the village and among his people at large. During the War of 1812 he became an implacable enemy of the Americans, and, after fighting with the British at the battles of Frenchtown and the Thames, he returned to Illinois and carried on a border warfare which ended only with the signing of a special treaty of peace in 1816. For years thereafter he was accustomed to lead his "British band" periodically across northern Illinois and southern Michigan to the British Indian agency to receive presents of arms, ammunition, provisions, and trinkets; and he was a principal intermediary in the British intrigues which gave Cass, as superin-

tendent of Indian affairs in the Northwest, many uneasy days. He was ever a restless spirit and a promoter of trouble, although one must admit that he had some justice on his side and that he was probably honest and sincere. Tall, spare, with pinched features, exceptionally high cheek-bones, and a prominent Roman nose, he was a figure to command attention — the more so by reason of the fact that he had practically no eyebrows and no hair except a scalp-lock, in which on state occasions he fastened a flaming bunch of dyed eagle feathers.

Returning from their hunt in the spring of 1830, Black Hawk and his warriors found the site of their town preëmpted by white settlers and their ancestral burying-ground ploughed over. In deep rage, they set off for Malden, where they were liberally entertained and encouraged to rebel. Coming again to the site of their village a year later, they were peremptorily ordered away. This time they resolved to stand their ground, and Black Hawk ordered the squatters themselves to withdraw and gave them until the middle of the next day to do so. Black Hawk subsequently maintained that he did not mean to threaten bloodshed. But the settlers so construed his com-

mand and deluged Governor Reynolds with petitions for help. With all possible speed, sixteen hundred volunteers and ten companies of United States regulars were dispatched to the scene, and on the 25th of June, they made an impressive demonstration within view of the village. In the face of such odds discretion seemed the better part of valor, and during the succeeding night Black Hawk and his followers quietly paddled across the Mississippi. Four days later they signed an agreement never to return to the eastern banks without express permission from the United States Government.

On the Indian side this compact was not meant to be kept. Against the urgent advice of Keokuk and other leaders, Black Hawk immediately began preparations for a campaign of vengeance. British intrigue lent stimulus, and a crafty "prophet," who was chief of a village some thirty-five miles up the Rock, made it appear that aid would be given by the Potawatomi, Winnebagoes, and perhaps other powerful peoples. In the first week of April, 1832, the disgruntled leader and about five hundred braves, with their wives and children, crossed the Mississippi at Yellow Banks and ascended the Rock River to the prophet's town, with

a view to raising a crop of corn during the summer and taking the war-path in the fall.

The invasion created much alarm throughout the frontier country. The settlers drew together about the larger villages, which were put as rapidly as possible in a state of defense. Again the Governor called for volunteers, and again the response more than met the expectation. Four regiments were organized, and to them were joined four hundred regulars. One of the first persons to come forward with an offer of his services was a tall, ungainly, but powerful young man from Sangamon County, who had but two years before settled in the State, and who was at once honored with the captaincy of his company. This man was Abraham Lincoln. Other men whose names loom large in American history were with the little army also. The commander of the regulars was Colonel Zachary Taylor. Among his lieutenants were Jefferson Davis and Albert Sidney Johnston, and Robert Anderson, the defender of Fort Sumter in 1860, was a colonel of Illinois volunteers. It is said that the oath of allegiance was administered to young Lincoln by Lieutenant Jefferson Davis!

Over marshy trails and across streams swollen

by the spring thaws the army advanced to Dixon's Ferry, ninety miles up the Rock, whence a detachment of three hundred men was sent out, under Major Stillman, to reconnoitre. Unluckily, this force seized three messengers of peace dispatched by Black Hawk and, in the clash which followed, was cut to pieces and driven into headlong flight by a mere handful of red warriors. The effect of this unexpected affray was both to stiffen the Indians to further resistance and to precipitate a fresh panic throughout the frontier. All sorts of atrocities ensued, and Black Hawk's name became a household bugaboo the country over.

Finally a new levy was made ready and sent north. Pushing across the overflowed wilderness stretches, past the sites of modern Beloit and Madison, this army, four thousand strong, came upon the fleeing enemy on the banks of the Wisconsin River, and at Wisconsin Heights, near the present town of Prairie du Sac, it inflicted a severe defeat upon the Indians. Again Black Hawk desired to make peace, but again he was frustrated, this time by the lack of an interpreter. The redskins' flight was continued in the direction of the Mississippi, which they reached in midsummer.

They were prevented from crossing by lack of canoes, and finally the half-starved band found itself caught between the fire of a force of regulars on the land side and a government supply steamer, the *Warrior*, on the water side, and between these two the Indian band was practically annihilated.

Thus ended the war — a contest originating in no general uprising or far-reaching plan, such as marked the rebellions instigated by Pontiac and Tecumseh, but which none the less taxed the strength of the border populations and opened a new chapter in the history of the remoter north-western territories. Black Hawk himself took refuge with the Winnebagoes in the Dells of the Wisconsin, only to be treacherously delivered over to General Street at Prairie du Chien. Under the terms of a treaty of peace signed at Fort Armstrong (Rock Island) in September, the fallen leader and some of his accomplices were held as hostages, and during the ensuing winter they were kept at Jefferson Barracks (St. Louis) under the surveillance of Jefferson Davis. In the spring of 1833 they were taken to Washington, where they had an interview with President Jackson. "We did not expect to conquer the whites," Black Hawk told the President; "they had too many houses,

too many men. I took up the hatchet, for my part, to revenge injuries which my people could no longer endure. Had I borne them longer without striking, my people would have said, 'Black Hawk is a woman — he is too old to be a chief — he is no Sauk.'” After a brief imprisonment at Fortress Monroe, where Jefferson Davis was himself confined at the close of the Civil War, the captives were set free, and were taken to Philadelphia, New York, up the Hudson, and finally back to the Rock River country.

For some years Black Hawk lived quietly on a small reservation near Des Moines. In 1837 the peace-loving Keokuk took him with a party of Sauk and Fox chiefs again to Washington, and on this trip he made a visit to Boston. The officials of the city received the august warrior and his companions in Faneuil Hall, and the Governor of the commonwealth paid them similar honor at the State House. Some war-dances were performed on the Common for the amusement of the populace, and afterwards the party was taken to see a performance by Edwin Forrest at the Tremont Theatre. Here all went well, except that at an exciting point in the play where one of the characters fell dying the Indians burst out into a war-

whoop, to the considerable consternation of the women and children present.

A few months after returning to his Iowa home, Black Hawk, now seventy-one years of age, was gathered to his fathers. He was buried about half a mile from his cabin, in a sitting posture, his left hand grasping a cane presented to him by Henry Clay, and at his side a supply of food and tobacco sufficient to last him to the spirit land, supposed to be three days' travel. "Rock River," he said in a speech at a Fourth of July celebration shortly before his death, "was a beautiful country. I liked my town, my cornfields, and the home of my people. I fought for it. It is now yours. Keep it, as we did. It will produce you good crops."

The Black Hawk War opened a new chapter in the history of the Northwest. The soldiers carried to their homes remarkable stories of the richness and attractiveness of the northern country, and the eastern newspapers printed not only detailed accounts of the several expeditions but highly colored descriptions of the charms of the region. Books and pamphlets by the score helped to attract the attention of the country. The result

was a heavy influx of settlers, many of them coming all the way from New England and New York, others from Pennsylvania and Ohio. Lands were rapidly surveyed and placed on sale, and surviving Indian hunting-grounds were purchased. Northern Illinois filled rapidly with a thrifty farming population, and the town of Chicago became an entrepôt. Further north, Wisconsin had been organized, in 1836, as a Territory, including not only the present State of that name but Iowa, Minnesota, and most of North and South Dakota. As yet the Iowa country, however, had been visited by few white people; and such as came were only hunters and trappers, agents of the American Fur and other trading companies, or independent traders. Two of the most active of these freelances of early days — the French Canadian Du-buque and the Englishman Davenport — have left their names to flourishing cities.

To recount the successive purchases by which the Government freed Iowa soil from Indian domination would be wearisome. The Treaty of 1842 with the Sauks and Foxes is typical. After a sojourn of hardly more than a decade in the Iowa country, these luckless folk were now persuaded to yield all their lands to the United States and re-

ture to a reservation in Kansas. The negotiations were carried out with all due regard for Indian susceptibilities. Governor Chambers, resplendent in the uniform of a brigadier-general of the United States army, repaired with his aides to the appointed rendezvous, and there the chiefs presented themselves, arrayed in new blankets and white deerskin leggings, with full paraphernalia of paint, feathers, beads, and elaborately decorated war clubs. Oratory ran freely, although through the enforced medium of an interpreter. The chiefs harangued for hours not only upon the beautiful meadows, the running streams, the stately trees, and the other beloved objects which they were called upon to surrender to the white man, but upon the moon and stars and rain and hail and wind, all of which were alleged to be more attractive and beneficent in Iowa than anywhere else. The Governor, in turn, gave the Indians some good advice, urging them to live peaceably in their new homes, to be industrious and self-supporting, to leave liquor alone, and, in general, to "be a credit to the country." When every one had talked as much as he liked, the treaty was solemnly signed.

The "New Purchase" was thrown open to settlers in the following spring; and the opening

brought scenes of a kind destined to be reënacted scores of times in the great West during succeeding decades — the borders of the new district lined, on the eve of the opening, with encamped settlers and their families ready to race for the best claims; horses saddled and runners picked for the rush; a midnight signal from the soldiery, releasing a flood of eager land-hunters armed with torches, axes, stakes, and every sort of implement for the laying out of claims with all possible speed; by daybreak, many scores of families “squatting” on the best pieces of ground which they had been able to reach; innumerable disputes, with a general readjustment following the intervention of the government surveyors.

The marvelous progress of the upper Mississippi Valley is briefly told by a succession of dates. In 1838 Iowa was organized as a Territory; in 1846 it was admitted as a State; in 1848 Wisconsin was granted statehood; and in 1849 Minnesota was given territorial organization with boundaries extending westward to the Missouri.

Thus the Old Northwest had arrived at the goal set for it by the large-visioned men who framed the Ordinance of 1787; every foot of its soil was in-

cluded in some one of the five thriving, democratic commonwealths that had taken their places in the Union on a common basis with the older States of the East and the South. Furthermore, the Mississippi had ceased to be a boundary. A magnificent vista reaching off to the remoter West and Northwest had been opened up; the frontier had been pushed far out upon the plains of Minnesota and Iowa. Decade after decade the powerful epic of westward expansion, shot through with countless tales of heroism and sacrifice, had steadily unfolded before the gaze of an astonished world; and the end was not yet in sight.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THERE is no general history of the Northwest covering the whole of the period dealt with in this book except Burke A. Hinsdale, *The Old Northwest* (1888). This is a volume of substantial scholarship, though it reflects but faintly the life and spirit of the people. The nearest approach to a moving narrative is James K. Hosmer, *Short History of the Mississippi Valley* (1901), which tells the story of the Middle West from the earliest explorations to the close of the nineteenth century, within a brief space, yet in a manner to arouse the reader's interest and sympathy. A fuller and very readable narrative to 1796 will be found in Charles Moore, *The Northwest under Three Flags* (1900). Still more detailed, and enlivened by many contemporary maps and plans, is Justin Winsor, *The Westward Movement* (1899), covering the period from the pacification of 1763 to the close of the eighteenth century. Frederick J. Turner, *Rise of the New West* (1906) contains several interesting and authoritative chapters on western development after the War of 1812; and John B. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States* (8 vols., 1883-1913), gives in the fourth and fifth volumes a very good account of westward migration.

An excellent detailed account of the settlement and development of a single section of the Northwest is

G. N. Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, Michigan Historical Publications, Univ. Series, No. 1 (1916). A very readable book is R. G. Thwaites, *The Story of Wisconsin* (rev. ed., 1899), containing a full account of the early relations of white men and red men, and of the Black Hawk War. Mention may be made, too, of H. E. Legler, *Leading Events of Wisconsin History* (1898).

Among the volumes dealing with the diplomatic history of the Northwest, mention should be made of two recent studies: C. W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics* (2 vols., 1917), and E. S. Corwin, *French Policy and the American Alliance* (1916).

Aside from Lincoln, few men of the earlier Northwest have been made the subjects of well-written biographies. Curiously, there are no modern biographies, good or bad, of George Rogers Clark, General St. Clair, or William Henry Harrison. John R. Spears, *Anthony Wayne* (1903) is an interesting book; and Andrew C. McLaughlin, *Lewis Cass* (1891), and Allen Johnson, *Stephen A. Douglas* (1908) are excellent. Lives of Lincoln that have importance for their portrayal of western society include: John T. Morse, Jr., *Abraham Lincoln* (2 vols., 1893); John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, a History* (10 vols., 1890); and Ida M. Tarbell, *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (new ed., 2 vols., 1917).

The reader will do well, however, to turn early to some of the works within the field which, by reason of their literary quality as well as their scholarly worth, have attained the dignity of classics. Foremost are the writings of Francis Parkman. Most of these, it is true, deal with the history of the American interior

prior to 1763. But *Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV* (Frontenac edition, 1915), and *A Half-Century of Conflict* (2 vols., same ed.) furnish the necessary background; and *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (2 vols., same ed.) is indispensable. Parkman's work closes with the Indian war following the Treaty of 1763. Theodore Roosevelt's *Winning of the West* (4 vols., 1889-96) takes up the story at that point and carries it to the collapse of the Burr intrigues during the second administration of Thomas Jefferson. This work was a pioneer in the field. In the light of recent scholarship it is subject to criticism at some points; but it is based on careful study of the sources, and for vividness and interest it has perhaps not been surpassed in American historical writing. A third extensive work is Archer B. Hulbert, *Historic Highways of America* (16 vols., 1902-05). In writing the history of the great land and water routes of trade and travel between East and West the author found occasion to describe, in interesting fashion, most phases of western life. The volumes most closely related to the subject matter of the present book are: *Military Roads of the Mississippi Valley* (VIII); *Waterways of Western Expansion* (IX); *The Cumberland Road* (X); and *Pioneer Roads and Experiences of Travellers* (XI-XII). Mention should be made also of Mr. Hulbert's *The Ohio River, a Course of Empire* (1906).

Further references will be found appended to the articles on Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin in *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th edition).

Opportunity to get the flavor of the period by reading contemporary literature is afforded by two principal kinds of books. One is reminiscences, letters, and

histories written by the Westerners themselves. Timothy Flint's *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (1826) will be found interesting; as also J. Hall, *Letters from the West* (1828), and T. Ford, *History of Illinois* (1854).

The second type of materials is books of travel written by visitors from the East or from Europe. Works of this nature are always subject to limitations. Even when the author tries to be accurate and fair, his information is likely to be hastily gathered and incomplete and his judgments unsound. Between 1800 and 1840 the Northwest was visited, however, by many educated and fair-minded persons who wrote readable and trustworthy descriptions of what they saw and heard. A complete list cannot be given here, but some of the best of these books are: John Melish, *Travels in the United States of America in the Years 1806 & 1807 and 1809, 1810 & 1811* (2 vols., 1812); William Cobbett, *A Year's Residence in the United States of America* (1818); Henry B. Fearon, *Sketches of America* (1818); Morris Birkbeck, *Letters from Illinois* (1818); John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811* (1819); Thomas Hulme, *Journal made during a Tour in the Western Countries of America, 1818-1819* (1828); and Michael Chevalier, *Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States* (1839). Copies of early editions of some of these works will be found in most large libraries. But the reader is happily not dependent on this resource. Almost all of the really important books of the kind are reprinted, with introductions and explanatory matter, in Reuben G. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (32 vols., 1904-07), which is one of our chief collections of historical materials.

INDEX

- Abadie, D', Governor of the French, New Orleans, 33
- Adams, John, 71, 72, 74
- Alabama, Georgians in, 173
- American Fur Company, 192-193
- Amherst, General Sir Jeffrey, 3, 14
- Anderson, Robert, 201
- Aranda, Count d', quoted, 76
- Armstrong, Fort (Rock Island), 203
- Astor, J. J., 192
- Atkinson, General Henry, 196
- Bank, National, 179
- Beauvais, M., of Kaskaskia, 29
- Belêtre, Captain, commandant at Detroit, 4
- Birkbeck, Morris, quoted, 105-106
- Black Hawk, Indian leader, 198-199; enemy of Americans, 198, 199-200; rebellion, 160, 200-203; after defeat, 203-04; later life and death, 204-05
- Blue Licks, Battle of, 71
- Bouquet, Colonel Henry, 15-16, 17
- Bushy Run, Battle of, 15-16
- Cadillac, *see* La Mothe-Cadillac
- Cahokia, Pontiac at, 18; school for Indians at, 30; under English, 31; taken by Clark, 48, 55; British try to seize, 69
- Caldwell, Captain, 71
- Campbell, Colonel, British commandant at Detroit, 6
- Campus Martius, fortification in Ohio, 81
- Canada passes to British control, 1
- Carver, Jonathan, 12
- Cass, Lewis, statesman of the Northwest, 183; life, 184-86; Governor of Michigan, 190; expedition into Mississippi regions, 190-91; aids against Indians, 196
- Cass Lake, 191
- Chartres, Fort, French commandant sends message to Indians, 14; Pontiac at, 17; "center of life and fashion," 30; after cession to English, 31; Saint-Ange commands, 33; Croghan invited to, 35; Sterling reaches, 36
- Chillicothe (O.), 100
- Chouteau, Pierre, 32-33
- Cincinnati, named, 82; migration to, 99; legislature in, 131; education, 171
- Clark, G. R., in Illinois country, 48; life and character, 48-49; delegate to Virginia Assembly, 49; proposes capturing British posts, 50; commissioned by Virginia council, 51; expedition, 51-56; at Kaskaskia, 59-60, 60-61; expedition to Vincennes, 61-66; plans expedition against Detroit, 67; failure of plan, 68; later life

- Clark, G. R.—*Continued*
and death, 68; expedition
against Miami towns, 71;
agreement of 1785 with
Indians, 79
- Clay, Henry, 164, 205
- Cleveland, Moses, 99
- Columbus (O.), Cumberland
Road reaches (1833), 166
- Continental Congress claims
Northwest, 71
- Corydon (Ind.), capital removed
from, 177 (note)
- Croghan, George, 34-36
- Cumberland Gap, 102
- Cumberland Road, 165-68, 178
- Cutler, Dr. Manasseh, 80-81, 82
- Cuyahoga River, Pontiac halts
English at, 3
- Davis, Jefferson, 201, 203, 204
- Dearborn, Fort, 149, 152, 153
- Deckhard rifle, 120
- Defiance, Fort, 92, 94
- Detroit, occupied by French,
2-3; surrenders to English, 4;
in 1760, 4-5; Pontiac plans
destruction of, 11; council with
Indians at, 17; Clark plans
attack, 67-68; British refuse
surrender, 83; Wayne obtains
cession of Indian land near,
95; garrison at, 152; Hull's
expedition for relief of, 153;
growth, 193
- Douglas, S. A., statesman of
Northwest, 183; life, 184-87
- Duquesne, Fort, *see* Pitt, Fort
- East Florida, province provided
in Proclamation of 1763, 24,
24 (note), 33; plan for Spain
to resume possession, 73
- Education in Northwest, 129-
130, 170-71
- Erie Canal opened (1825), 102,
176
- Erie, Lake, French settlement
on, 2-3; Perry's victory on, 154
- Fallen Timbers, Battle at, 92-94
- Flint, Timothy, *Western Monthly
Review*, 169
- Florida, *see* East Florida, West
Florida
- France supports Spain in her
American policy, 72-74
- Franklin, Benjamin, advice to
British ministers, 20; ac-
quires western land, 38, 39;
on committee for boundary
negotiation, 72, 74
- French settlements in North-
west, 2, 28-33; Loftus's ex-
pedition against, 33-34; under
English control, 36-37
- Fur trade, 191-93
- Gage, General Thomas, 34, 36
- Galena (Ill.), 195, 196
- Gallatin, Albert, 164, 165
- Gallipolis, attempt to build
French colony at, 81
- Garfield, J. A., 100
- Ghent, Peace of, 172
- Gibault, Pierre, French priest,
48, 55, 59, 62
- Gladwyn, Major, 11, 12
- Gnadenhütten, massacre at, 70
- Great Britain refuses to give
up fortified posts, 83
- Greenville, Fort, 91, 94; Treaty
of, 131
- Grenada, province provided in
Proclamation of 1763, 24,
24 (note)
- Grosseilliers, *see* Ménard des
Grosseilliers
- Hamilton, Henry, Lieutenant-
Governor at Detroit, 43; and
the Indians, 47; part in Revo-
lution, 57 *et seq.*
- Harmar, General Josiah, 80, 84,
85
- Harmar, Fort, 80
- Harrison, W. H., in Northwest
Territory, 131-32; on Indians.
133-34; conference with Te-

- Harrison, W. H.—*Continued*
 cumseh, 139-40, 140-43; at
 Tippecanoe, 144-47; chief in
 command in West, 153-54,
 156
 Harrison, Fort, 144, 152
 Hayes, R. B., 100
 Helm, Lieutenant, 59
 Hennepin, Louis, 190
 Henry, Patrick, 49, 51
 Hillsborough, Lord, on British
 policy in regard to Indian
 reservations, 26
 Howard, Fort, 196
 Huguenots forbidden to emi-
 grate, 29
 Hull, General William, 138, 153,
 156
 Illinois, a county of Virginia, 56;
 after War of 1812, 161; ad-
 mitted as State (1818), 161,
 177 (note); immigration, 162;
 frontier settlers in, 173; South-
 erners in, 174-75; population
 (1818), 177 (note); indentures
 182; slavery, 182-83
 Indiana, settlement, 98; formed
 from part of Northwest Terri-
 tory, 132; population (1800-
 10), 132-33; (1810-16), 161;
 (1820), 177 (note); after War
 of 1812, 161; admitted as State
 (1816), 161; immigration, 162;
 frontier settlers in, 172; South-
 erners in, 174-75; indentures,
 182; slavery, 182
 Indianapolis, Cumberland Road
 reaches, 166; capital removed
 to (1825), 177 (note)
 Indians, parleys with Rogers,
 3-4; incited by French against
 English, 4; relations with
 French at Detroit, 5; menace
 to English, 7-8; protest against
 English encroachments, 8-9;
 Pontiac's conspiracy, 9 *et seq.*;
 method of warfare, 15; trade
 with, 25, 44-45; reservation by
 Proclamation of 1763, 25-27;
 attack Croghan's band, 34-
 35; in Revolution, 45 *et seq.*;
 massacre at Gnadenhütten,
 70; agreements with, 78-79;
 rebel against Americans, 82-
 83; incited by British, 83-84;
 punitive expedition against
 Miamis, 84-85; Wayne against,
 89 *et seq.*; danger on Ohio
 River from, 108; cessions by,
 132, 135, 140; relations with
 white settlers, 133-35; Te-
 cumseh's conspiracy, 136 *et*
seq.; Battle of Tippecanoe,
 144-46; raids of 1812, 149;
 menace removed after War of
 1812, 160; trouble with Winne-
 bagoes, 196-98; Black Hawk
 War, 200-03; treaties, 206-07
 Iowa, organized as Territory
 (1838), 208; admitted as State
 (1846), 208
 Itasca, Lake, 191
 Jay, John, 72, 74
 Jay Treaty, 94-95, 181
 Jefferson, Thomas, 51, 67, 72, 164
 Jefferson Barracks (St. Louis),
 203
 Jefferson City (Mo.), Cumber-
 land Road marked out to, 166
 Johnson, Allen, *Jefferson and his*
Colleagues cited, 138 (note)
 Johnson, Dr. Samuel, opinion of
 Northwest America, 21-22
 Johnson, Sir William, visits De-
 troit, 6; Pontiac surrenders to,
 18; sends Croghan against In-
 dians, 34
 Johnson, W. S., 39
 Johnston, A. S., 201
 Joliet, Louis, 189
 Kaskaskia, French settlement,
 28, 30; under English, 31;
 Clark captures, 48, 52-53;
 Clark at, 60-61; British
 attack, 69

- Kendall, Amos, quoted, 156
 Kentucky, organized as county of Virginia, 49; frontier settlers in, 172
 Keokuk, Indian chief, 198, 200, 204
 Knox, William, British Under-Secretary for the Colonies, 22
- Lacède, Pierre, 32
 La Mothe-Cadillac, Antoine de, founds Detroit (1701), 2
 La Salle, René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de, 2
 Laulewasikaw, "Prophet," Brother of Tecumseh, 135, 147-48
 Laurens, Henry, 72
 Le Bœuf, Fort, 14
 Lee, "Light-Horse Harry," 89
 Leech Lake, Pike reaches, 190
Leopard-Chesapeake affair, 138
 Lexington (Ky.), aspires to be "Athens of the West," 171
 Lincoln, Abraham, 184-88, 201
 Lincoln, Thomas, father of Abraham, 185
 Loftus, Major, 33
 "Long Knives," 101
L-os-anti-ville, 82; *see also* Cincinnati
 Louisiana Purchase, 161, 190
 Louisville (Ky.), education in, 171
- McAdam, John, devises road construction, 165-66
 Mackinac, Fort, 152, 153
 Malden, Fort, 153
 Marietta (O.), founded, 81; settlers from New England, 99
 Marquette, Jacques, Jesuit missionary, 189
 Mason, George, 51
 Massac, Fort, 52
 Maysville Road Bill (1830), 178
 Ménard des Grosseilliers, 189
- Miami, Fort, 88, 92
 Michilimackinac, 95
 Minnesota organized as Territory (1849), 208
 Mississippi, Georgians in, 173
 Mississippi Valley, 24-25
 Missouri, population of Territory (1812-18), 161-62; frontier settlers in, 173
 Monroe, Fortress, 204
 Montreal, fall of (1760), 1
- National Road, *see* Cumberland Road
 New England, westward migration from, 99, 175-77
 New Orleans, Indians seek equipment at, 18; Jackson's victory, 159
New Orleans, The, first steamboat in West, 168
 Niagara, council with Indians at, 17
 Northwest Territory, extent of, 1-2; French settlements, 2; Franklin advises British to retain, 20; ignorance of country, 21-22; questions of settlement and government, 22 *et seq.*; settlement, 37 *et seq.*; 79-82; Continental Congress claims, 71; Treaty of Paris gives to U. S., 75; state claims yield to nation, 77; migration to, 97 *et seq.*; character of country, 110-12; pioneer life, 112 *et seq.*; in War of 1812, 151 *et seq.*; loses frontier character, 162; religion, 170; education, 170-71; sectionalism, 173-74; Southern influence, 176-77; national issues, 178-79; form of government, 179-80; slavery, 180-84; explorations upon upper Mississippi, 189-91; furtrade, 191-93; lead-mining, 194-95; after Black Hawk War, 205-06; Indian treaties, 206-08; bibliography,

- Northwest Territory—*Cont'd*
 211-14; *see also* names of States
- Ohio, settlement, 98 *et seq.*; routes to, 102, *et seq.*; formed from part of Northwest Territory, 132; admitted as State (1802), 132, 165; means of transportation in, 157; frontier settlers in, 172; Southern-ers in, 174-75
- Ohio Company, 39, 80-81
- Ohio River, emigrants on, 106-09
- Ordinance of 1787, 77-78, 131, 180, 181, 182
- Oswego, Pontiac surrenders at, 18
- Ottawa (Ill.), French settlement near, 2
- Ouiatanon, 35
- Paine, R. D., *The Fight for a Free Sea* cited, 153 (note)
- Paris, Treaty of (1783), 20, 22, 75
- Parkman, Francis, quoted, 5-6, 19, 32-33
- Perry, Commodore O. H., 154
- Pike, Lieutenant Z. M., 190
- Pitt, Fort, 15, 16, 17, 34, 36
- Pittman, Captain, 34
- Pontiac, Indian chief, 3; conspiracy, 9 *et seq.*; power broken, 17; further plots, 34; meets Croghan, 35
- Presqu'isle (Erie), council with Indians at, 17
- Proclamation of 1763, 24, 24 (note), 41-42
- "Prophet," *see* Laulewasikaw
- Prophet's Town, 139
- Putnam, General Rufus, 80, 81, 82
- Quebec, province provided under Proclamation of 1763, 24, 24 (note)
- Quebec Act (1774), 41-43
- Radisson, Pierre, 189
- Raisin River, 153
- Rayneval, secretary to French Foreign Minister, 74
- Recovery, Fort, 91
- Red Bird, Indian chief, 196, 197
- Revolution, effects on West, 45
- Rocheblave, commandant at Kaskaskia, 54
- Rogers, Major Robert, 3, 4
- Roosevelt, Theodore, quoted, 61, 156
- Sackville, Fort, 55
- Saint Ange de Bellerive, 18, 19, 33, 36
- St. Anthony, Falls of, Hennepin reaches, 190
- St. Clair, General Arthur, 81, 84, 85-87, 89
- St. Joseph, Fort, 69-70
- St. Louis, French settlement near, 2; French town, 18; established (1764), 32; Saint-Ange retires to, 36; under Spanish rule, 69; education in, 171
- St. Louis, Fort, 2
- Ste. Genevieve, 32
- Schoolcraft, Henry, 191
- Scioto Company, 81
- "Seven Ranges," 80, 99-100
- Sheridan, Lieutenant-General P. H., 100
- Sherman, John, 100
- Sherman, General W. T., 100
- Sinclair, Lieutenant-Governor Patrick, 69
- Slavery, 180-84
- Snelling, Fort, 196
- Spain, cessions to, 18, 28; ally of France, 69; seizes Fort St. Joseph, 69-70; American policy, 72-73; plan presented at peace negotiation, 73-74
- Stanwix, Fort, Treaty of, 78
- "Starved Rock," 2
- Sterling, Captain Thomas, 36
- Stillman, Major, 202
- Symmes, Judge J. C., of N. J., 82

- Tariff, attitude of Northwest toward, 178-79
- Taylor, Zachary, 201
- Tecumseh, plans confederacy, 135 *et seq.*; at Prophet's Town, 139; confers with Harrison at Vincennes, 139-40, 140-43; sympathy with British, 148, 150; joins British in 1812, 152; killed, 154
- Thames, Battle of the, 154
- Tippecanoe, Battle of, 144-47
- Transportation, difficulties, 163-64; highways, 164-68; stage lines, 167; steamboats, 168-70; Erie Canal, 176; roads and canals, 178; on Mississippi River, 195
- Vandalia, projected colony, 39
- Vandalia (Ill.), Cumberland Road graded to, 166
- Vaudreuil, Pierre de Rigaud, Marquis de, Governor of Canada, 1, 3
- Venango, Fort, 14
- Vergennes, Charles Gravier, Comte de, French Foreign Minister, 74
- Vigo, François, 60-61
- Villiers, Neyon de, 31
- Vincennes, French colony, 2; under British, 31; surrenders to Clark, 55; captured by British, 58-59; Clark retakes, 63-66, 69; Harrison and Tecumseh in conference at, 139-140, 140-43
- Wabash Valley, French settlement in, 2
- Waite, Chief Justice M. R., 100
- Walpole, Thomas, 39
- War of 1812, popular in West, 151; standing army, 152; volunteers called, 152; in the West, 153-54; military organization, 154-56; lack of transportation facilities, 157-158; life of frontier soldiers, 158-59; peace (1815), 160
- Warrior, The, Government supply steamer in Black Hawk War, 203
- Washington, George, acquires western land, 38-39
- Wayne, "Mad Anthony," 89 *et seq.*
- Wayne, Fort, 94, 152; Treaty of, 135
- Wekau, Indian chief, 197
- Welby, Adlard, quoted, 163
- West Florida, province provided under Proclamation of 1763, 24, 24 (note), 33; plan for Spain to resume possession of, 73
- Western Reserve, 99, 102, 172, 175
- Wharton, Samuel, 39
- Whistler, Major, 196, 197
- Wilkinson, General James, 190
- Willing, The, Clark's boat, 61, 64, 66, 67
- Winnebago, Fort, 197
- Wisconsin admitted as State (1848), 208
- Wythe, George, 51

PART II
ADVENTURERS OF OREGON
A CHRONICLE
OF THE FUR TRADE
BY
CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER

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CONTENTS

I. THE RIVER OF THE WEST	Page 1
II. LEWIS AND CLARK	" 27
III. THE REIGN OF THE TRAPPER	" 74
IV. THE TONQUIN	" 113
V. ASTOR'S OVERLANDERS	" 144
VI. ASTORIA UNDER THE NOR'WESTERS	" 185
VII. THE KING OF OLD OREGON	" 211
VIII. THE FALL OF THE FUR KINGDOM	" 240
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	" 273
INDEX	" 277

ADVENTURERS OF OREGON

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CHAPTER I

THE RIVER OF THE WEST

HISTORIC Oregon emerges from myth. Over the region of those "continuous woods" which shrouded the true River of the West, the romancings of ancient mariners had spread the mirage of a great inland waterway called the Strait of Anian. This waterway threaded the continent from sea to sea, among wondrous isles gorgeous with palaces, and linked Europe to Asia. Into the Strait of Anian, so the legend ran — and gathered magic as it ran — flowed a mighty river, the River of the West. This river had its source in the Mountains of Bright Stones, in the heart of the continent, and its broad equable tide was well adapted to bear fleets of treasure ships into the strait that made so convenient a short cut between Spain and the sublime East.

The first Adventurers of Oregon were therefore certain Latin and Levantine seamen, who, for the glory of some king, said that they had bravely sailed and even meticulously charted these strange waters of their own fancy! Truly, in their tales, as Bancroft says, "maritime lying reaches the climax and borders on the heroic." There was no Strait of Anian such as they described.¹ Yet where the imagination of these romancers coursed among fabulous isles, one lucky American seaman, after three centuries of naval fantasy, discovered the Columbia River flowing scarf-like over the shoulder blade of the continent. And it was chiefly by virtue of that discovery that the wilderness empire of Oregon found its destiny within the United States of America.

But we may not leave the myth of the direct passage to Asia with merely a passing reference; it has had too potent an influence upon history for such casual treatment. It dates back to Columbus, of course. Columbus discovered America; but he

¹ The documents relating to these early myths are printed in the first volume of Bancroft's *History of the Northwest Coast*. The name of one of the romancers is perpetuated in the name of the strait discovered in 1787 by Barkley, an English trader, and named by him in honor of Juan de Fuca, a Greek pilot, whose gallant ship was said to have breasted Anian's waters in 1592.

did not discover that pathway to the Orient which he was seeking, nor that the round world was much larger and Asia much smaller than he had calculated them to be. He died believing that somewhere not far behind the new lands he had found lay the Asiatic coast, and that somewhere — to the south, he thought — opened a direct sea passage whereby the galleons of Spain might the swifter reach and bear homeward “the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.”

The mystery of the short route to Asia concerned Spain very particularly. Spain was the leading maritime nation of the world, with Portugal a close second; but now that all Europe was agog for discovery, how long would it be before other nations — France, or perhaps even England — should challenge her rights? How should Spain guard against the encroachments of other nations with oversea ambitions? In some such manner reasoned, with disquiet minds, their Spanish majesties who had financed Christopher’s voyages. They appealed to the Pope to define the boundaries of Spanish possession. So Alexander VI, generous and of helpful intent, drew a line through the Atlantic from pole to pole, and gave all that lay west of the line to Spain and all that lay east of it to

Portugal. Surely not even the lore of Olympus, where high gods made merry with a world of little men, offers a scene so rich and quaint as that which we may conjure up from the story of Pope Alexander dividing the world between his children, as if it were but a rosy apple. Their Spanish majesties feared, indeed, even after such fair apportionment, that it might yet prove to be an apple of discord. They resolved therefore to have the western passage discovered without delay, secretly if possible, and fortified at both entrances.

Thus began the great search which inspired most of the explorers in the New World during three centuries. The Cabots, Balboa, Magellan, Cortés, Cartier, De Soto, Drake, Hudson, La Salle, were adventurers who set out to make a reality of the great discoverer's dream. Not all of them were Spaniards; and thereby was it proved that Spain had not groundlessly doubted whether the Pope's award would long satisfy those nations which had received no portion of it!

The first mariner actually to sail north of the southern boundary of the present State of Oregon is supposed to have been the Spanish seaman after whom Cape Ferrelo is named. Ferrelo set out in

1543 from Panama where the Spaniards had planted their first colony on the Pacific. He appears, however, to have left no record of having landed. Perhaps the northern waters, in his estimation, promised little; at any rate his voyage led to no further northward explorations at that time. The Spanish interests of that day lay in the south; and it was indeed a golden south, where Spanish seamen loaded their ships with wealth wrung from the enslaved and terrorized natives and then sailed homeward to spread the hoard at the King's feet.

It was the loss of some of these treasure ships, or rather of their contents, in 1579 — a loss occasioned by the unwelcome activities of a certain Francis Drake from England — that once again turned Spanish sails northward in a search for the hidden passage. Not only had Drake swooped down as a conqueror upon waters and shores belonging exclusively to Spain, not only had he escaped to England with loot from Spanish vessels, but he had discovered the desired passage and had sailed through it — so the Spaniards believed. Drake, of course, had not discovered the passage, though he had gone northward for that purpose, desiring some other homeward route than the one frequented by Spanish ships. He had, however,

anchored in Oregon waters and had taken possession, for his Queen, of the long rolling coast to the south, naming it New Albion — prophetically naming it so, for although Spain was to be overlord of this coast for centuries, it was to pass finally into the hands of a people speaking their law in the English tongue.

The fearsome tales told thereafter of the red-bearded English corsair miraculously steering his treasure-crammed ship, the *Golden Hind* — the very name sounded supernatural — into the mysterious passage, inspired Spanish seamen to seek that passage anew; for by what way the terrible Drake, “laughing athwart the decks,” had gone he might even again return.

But if Drake thus, in a legendary rôle, inspired the mariners of Spain to new search for the hidden passage, he presently, in his proper person, put a curb on Spain’s activities and humbled her pride upon the sea. And for two hundred years after those ten days in July, 1588, when Drake scattered the blazoned sails of the Armada upon the rocks and tide-rips of the North Sea, Spain had little heart for maritime exploration in any quarter of the globe. Had it not been for that achievement of Elizabeth’s seamen far from Pacific shores, who

knows what might have happened on the west coast of America north of Mexico? Or on the east coast? With Spain mistress of the seas, could Englishmen have obtained a foothold on either coast to drive a continental wedge between the Spanish on the south and the French on the north? The defeat of the Armada, remote as it seems, in fact decided that the laws and language of England should prevail in America.

Two centuries passed. Once again Spanish seamen of the south turned north to seek the western gate of that hidden passage. It was shortly after the accession of Carlos III to the Spanish throne, in 1759, that Spain's ambition for world power, which had been somnolent since the disaster of the Armada, awoke once more. Drake's countrymen meanwhile had settled along the Atlantic seaboard, which coast also Spain held to be hers *de jure*, if not *de facto*. Thus had the English spread already to the New World their religious heresy and their peculiar ideas of government. In the very year when Carlos ascended the throne, they had broken the blade of France on the heights of Quebec; and in one year more they had practically swept from the northeastern parts of America that autocratic system of government and those

social ideals which were the fundamentals of Spanish power, no less than of French.

When Carlos of Spain was ready to give his attention to the northern half of the New World, the English colonists — either ignorant of or indifferent to the Spanish decree that, whatever truce Spain might hold with England in Europe, there should be “no peace beyond the line” — were already beginning their thrust westward towards the heart of the continent. Moreover, Spain’s domination of the Pacific coast was seriously threatened by another power from the north. Russian fur hunters had overrun Siberia to the shore of the Pacific, where they had established headquarters at Kamchatka. In 1741 Vitus Bering, a Dane sailing for the Russian Czar, had discovered the Aleutian Isles and the strait that bears his name. And now the Russians were masters of Alaska, reaping enormous wealth from their yearly harvest of sea otter and seal. Now, therefore, more than ever was it vital to Spain that the hidden channel should be discovered, its banks fortified, and its waters closed forever to all but Spanish keels.

So, in 1774, the Spanish Viceroy of Mexico dispatched Juan Perez to make a thorough exploration of the Northwest Coast. The time seemed

auspicious for New Spain. True, the English had swept away the French and in this very year were battling with the Indians beyond the Appalachians for the rich territory of the Ohio; and far to the north the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company were pushing westward. But the storm of revolution was gathering in the American colonies. If the winds but continued to blow advantageously for Spanish statecraft, the passing of that storm should see Spain arbiter of the whole New World. The acquirement of Louisiana from France, in 1763, signified Spanish intent to press in from the south and west upon the English colonies. And, to forestall Russia, the interloper in Alaska, the whole of the Northwest Coast must be explored and formally annexed to New Spain.

From Bruno Heceta, who followed Perez's route and made a landing in 1775 at the present Point Grenville to establish Spanish claims, comes the first mention that is not legendary of the River of the West. Heceta did not discover a river, but he noted in his journal that, when anchored near the forty-sixth parallel, his observations of the currents had convinced him "that a great quantity of water rushed from this bay on the ebb of the tide." Illness among his crew as well as other mishaps

prevented Heceta from entering to explore the bay where the River of the West — still unseen of white men — emptied its foaming and roaring waters.

By 1776 the Northwest Coast had been thoroughly explored, so Spanish mariners reported, as far north at least as Sitka, although neither the Strait of Anian nor the River of the West had been discovered. Spain, however, made no move to occupy the land, as there seemed no immediate danger from Russia, and the American Revolution, as Spanish and French statesmen saw it, was ultimately to bring the revolting colonists into the fold of their Latin allies. In pursuance of the usual Spanish policy of secretiveness, Spain did not publish any account of the explorations of her seamen. But in 1778 a Yankee named Jonathan Carver published in London a book purporting to be a record of his travels across the American continent, in which he related as fact what Indians had told him of the great River of the West rising among the Mountains of Bright Stones and flowing into the Strait of Anian. The name of this great river, said Carver, was the Oregon; and a map proved the tale. This book contained some truth, for apparently Carver did penetrate beyond the Mississippi, but it contained also not a little myth and

a great deal of padding from untrustworthy sources. Today the one important bit in the book is the grand name "Oregon." Is it an Indian word, or a word of Spanish derivation, or did Carver invent it? No one knows. It seems not to have been used again until 1811 when William Cullen Bryant retrieved it and immortalized it in *Thanatopsis*:

. . . Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings. . . .

Two years before the appearance of Carver's book, that is, in 1776, when England and her American colonies were locked in bitter strife, the British Admiralty had sent Captain Cook to explore the Northwest Coast of America. One of the aims of this expedition, of course, was the discovery of the passage; for the officers and crew of any ship of His Majesty's discovering that passage would receive twenty thousand pounds sterling, an award offered by Parliament in 1745 and still standing. Cook anchored off Nootka, Vancouver Island, on March 29, 1778, and then sailed north until forced by ice to turn back. He wrote in his journal: "Whatever passage there may be, or at

least part of it, must lie to the north of latitude 72°,” which was indeed so. The only actual passage was the impracticable northern strait already discovered by Bering. Cook then crossed to the Asiatic coast and thence to the Sandwich Islands, where he was killed by natives. His voyage to the Northwest Coast had results. It was made the basis of England’s claims in the quarrel with Spain about Nootka ten years later. More important, however, was the introduction of Englishmen to the sea-otter trade. A few sea-otter skins had been presented by the natives at Nootka to Cook and his men; and when Cook’s ship arrived at Canton, after the tragedy at the Sandwich Islands, these furs were bid for by Chinese tradesmen at what seemed to the English seamen fabulous sums.

Trade! Furs convertible into gold! Here was the potent influence to bring out of the realm of myth the land “where rolls the Oregon.” Since the days when Elizabeth had answered Philip of Spain out of the mouths of Drake’s guns, England had consistently refused to concur in Spain’s doctrine that the Pacific was a closed sea. So when the news of furs on the Pacific coast of America was bruited about English ports, English merchants lost no time in preparing expeditions for

trade with the natives of that far country. As for the direct passage, let the explorers look for it; as to the Spanish fiat, let the diplomats wrangle about it. Honest merchants were neither to be lured by an invisible channel nor barred by an intangible principle from new paths of trade. Presently four separate fur trading expeditions — one from China, two from India, and one from England — ploughed Pacific waters.

One of these, sailing from Bengal, was commanded by John Meares, late of the British navy. Though Meares made Nootka his headquarters, he, too, like Cook, had some influence on Oregon. He was an enterprising soul and a brisk trader, hardly more scrupulous than other men of his class at that time. Since he was obliged to sail along a so-called Spanish coast, he hoisted the Portuguese flag when convenient, and perhaps left it flying at the *Felice's* masthead while he went ashore at Nootka and purchased the place — with boundaries unspecified — from Chief Maquinna for some copper and a pair of pistols, and denoted it not Portuguese but British soil. He erected buildings of a primitive sort and “occupied.” He shipped some Chinese workmen from their native land, gathered up Kanaka wives for them at Hawaii —

possibly with the idea that the less conversation between married folk the more harmony — and proceeded to colonize Nootka. He was well received by the Indians. His description of the welcome given him is worthy of reproduction, for the sake of the picture it gives us of the chiefs Maquinna (or Maquilla) and Callicum and their warriors, a scene the like of which can never recur. Meares wrote in his journal, on May 16, 1788:

They moved with great parade about the ship, singing at the same time a song of a pleasing though sonorous melody: there were twelve of these canoes, each of which contained about eighteen men, the greater part of whom were cloathed in dresses of the most beautiful skins of the sea otter, which covered them from their neck to their ancles. Their hair was powdered with the white down of birds, and their faces bedaubed with red and black ochre, in the form of a shark's jaw, and a kind of spiral line which rendered their appearance extremely savage. In most of these boats there were eight rowers on a side. . . . The Chief occupied a place in the middle, and was also distinguished by an high cap, pointed at the crown, and ornamented at the top with a small tuft of feathers. We listened to their song with an equal degree of surprise and pleasure. It was, indeed, impossible for any ear susceptible of delight from musical sounds, or any mind that was not insensible to the power of melody, to remain unmoved by this solemn, unexpected concert. . . . Sometimes

they would make a sudden transition from the high to the low tones, with such melancholy turns in their variations, that we could not reconcile to ourselves the manner in which they acquired or contrived this more than untaught melody of nature. . . . Everyone beat time with undeviating regularity, against the gunwale of the boat, with their paddles; and at the end of every verse or stanza, they pointed with extended arms to the North and the South, gradually sinking their voices in such a solemn manner as to produce an effect not often attained by the orchestras in our quarter of the globe.

After the concert, the chiefs brought aboard the *Felice* a skin bottle of seal oil, in which exhilarating beverage Meares and his guests pledged their eternal friendship.

Having thus established amicable relations with the Indians, Meares set about erecting buildings and a fort, and he also built a little ship, the *North-West America*, the first vessel to be constructed on the Northwest Coast. He explored southward in search of Bruno Heceta's river, or the River of the West. He did not find it, though he crossed the bar and stood near enough to its mouth to name the spit of land hiding it Cape Disappointment, and the harbor beyond, Deception Bay.

His colony soon came to grief. The year 1789 saw two other expeditions in these waters. One

hailed from the Spanish port of San Blas, Mexico, and the other from Boston. The Viceroy of Mexico had bethought him that it was now three years since he had sent up the coast a sea scout to report what the Russians were doing. Spain had graciously permitted the Russians to occupy Alaska, but with the distinct proviso that their ramshackle trading craft were not to nose southward. It was high time to ascertain if this understanding were perfect on both sides. The Viceroy therefore sent north Don Estevan Martinez, captain of the *Princessa*, which was no trading vessel but an imposing ship of war bristling with guns. Martinez made some startling discoveries. He learned that the Russians were about to push down to Nootka; he found at Nootka the Meares colony; he found also riding at anchor in Nootka Sound, besides an English vessel, the *Iphigenia*, two other vessels flying the Stars and Stripes, the *Columbia*, Captain John Kendrick, and the *Lady Washington*, Captain Robert Gray, both of Boston. Meares himself was absent on a voyage to China. Martinez seized the colony and the English vessels, the *Argonaut*, the *Princess Royal*, and the *North-West America*, as they sailed into port, quite unaware of the Spanish

intruder. He took Captain Colnett of the *Argonaut* a prisoner to Mexico. He did not molest the American vessels.

England promptly demanded redress for the seizures at Nootka. Spain answered haughtily, rattled the sword, and made a gesture to her cousin of France, who nodded agreeably and took down the family armor and began polishing it publicly. But the earth beneath the Bourbon's palace at Versailles was already quivering from the subterranean rumblings of the French Revolution, and Spain saw that the aid she had counted upon was uncertain at best. Spain was obliged therefore to sign articles which, besides reimbursing the enterprising Meares for his losses, restored Nootka to the British flag, and acknowledged the right of British subjects to free and uninterrupted navigation, commerce, and fishing in the North Pacific; also to make and possess establishments on the Pacific coast wherever these should not conflict with the prior rights of Spain. Though the articles defined the rights of only the contracting parties, England and Spain, yet in signing them Spain abrogated her ancient claim to sole sovereignty on the Pacific; and, whether either party realized it or not, in this document both concurred

in the principles of a free sea and of ownership by occupation and development.

But those Americans, Kendrick and Gray, trading at Nootka under the Stars and Stripes — who were they? Of them history tells not so much as we would like to know. They were in the service of a group of merchant adventurers in Boston, friends of Doctor Thomas Bulfinch of Bowdoin Square. These merchants, we are told, on a winter evening in 1787, forgathered in the Doctor's library and, fired by a published account of Cook's voyages, then and there decided to enter the sea-otter trade in the Pacific. Joseph Barrell, a prosperous trader and banker, seems to have taken the lead in the enterprise, in which Bulfinch himself joined. The other partners were Crowell Hatch, Samuel Brown, John Pintard, and John Derby. These were gentlemen traders of the old school, and theirs was the happy lot to live in the hey-day of Boston's adventuring upon the sea, when four hundred sail might often be counted in the harbor by any worthy merchant, such as Joseph Barrell, as he loitered on his way to the Bunch of Grapes, the famous old tavern on the site of the present Exchange. It was at the Bunch of

Grapes that the Boston Marine Association held its meetings.

The partners procured and made ready for sea a ship, the *Columbia*, and a little sloop, the *Lady Washington*. The vessels were stocked with trinkets to trade with the natives for furs. The voyage was to be a long one, around the Horn, around the whole world, indeed, for the *Columbia* would sail from the Pacific coast to China, there exchange a cargo of furs for a cargo of tea and silk, and return home to Boston. It was the 1st of October before all was ready for the voyage. Then, after the usual celebrations on board, the *Columbia*, under command of John Kendrick, and the *Lady Washington*, under command of Robert Gray, lifted anchor and put out to sea, and the partners went back to their daily round to await the return of the *Columbia* with a rich cargo from China.

Nearly three years rolled by. Then, one day in August, 1790, into Boston harbor sailed Robert Gray on the *Columbia*. He and Kendrick had spent two seasons gathering furs on the coast; there they had found the British trader Meares and had seen his post raided by the Spaniard Don Martinez; they had exchanged ships in the Pacific, where Kendrick remained to continue the trade.

Gray had taken the furs to Canton and now brought home a cargo of tea. The furs had not sold well in Canton; perhaps Gray was not a good trader; at all events, the results in trade were disappointing. But, for the moment, the partners forgot their losses. Had not their own ship, the *Columbia*, circumnavigated the globe? All Boston turned out in its best attire to welcome Gray as he marched up the street followed by his Hawaiian attendant in a bright feathered cloak; and Governor John Hancock held a reception in his honor.

The partners met once more in Bulfinch's library. Two of them decided to withdraw, but the others considered the prospects promising enough to warrant a second venture. So the good ship *Columbia* was overhauled and made ready for sea again.

On September 28, 1790, Robert Gray sailed out of Boston harbor on his second voyage around the Horn. On June 5, 1791, he arrived at Clayoquot, the American trading post on Vancouver Island. That summer the Yankee adventurers fared not too well. Gray sailed as far north as Portland channel, where some of his men were murdered by hostile Indians. His comrade in adventure, Kendrick of the *Lady Washington*, also met with

tragedy. The natives of Queen Charlotte Island attacked Kendrick's ship and his men on shore; and his son was among the slain. The two ships returned to Clayoquot in September and Kendrick set out for China with the furs. Gray erected at Clayoquot a fort and constructed a little sloop, named the *Adventure*, which he put under command of Haswell, his second officer. The Indians about Clayoquot were not friendly, and during the winter Gray and his men were obliged to exercise constant watchfulness to avert a meditated attack. On April 2, 1792, both vessels left Clayoquot, the *Adventure* turning north for trade and the *Columbia* dropping southward. Perhaps Gray was only bent on finding new trading fields, for sea otter were still plentiful to the south of Vancouver Island. Yet his movements suggest that he may have been consciously exploring, searching for that passage which was supposed to lie somewhere hidden, or for the River of the West.

It was in October, 1790, the month following the *Columbia's* departure from Boston, that England and Spain signed the articles relative to Nootka and to mutual rights on the Pacific. In December George Vancouver, a British naval officer, who had

sailed with Cook as a midshipman, received his commission to go to Nootka to take over from Spanish emissaries the land seized by Martinez and to explore. Vancouver's ships left Falmouth, England, on April 1, 1791. They rounded the Cape of Good Hope, crossed the Indian Ocean, and sailed along the western coast of Australia, made Van Diemen's Land, New Zealand, the Society Islands, and the Sandwich Islands, whence they set sail for the Northwest Coast of America. They sighted that coast in 39° north latitude on April 17, 1792. At dawn on the twenty-ninth of the same month, as they headed northward, the English mariners descried a sail, the first they had seen in many months of wandering over the watery wilderness. The stranger ship declared herself by firing a gun and sending the American colors to the masthead. The *Discovery*, under Vancouver's personal command, hove to for an exchange of greetings and news. The American vessel was the *Columbia*, and her commander, Captain Robert Gray, informed Vancouver that he had recently lain for nine days off the mouth of a large river where the reflux was so violent that he dared not attempt to enter. Gray had also sailed for many miles through the narrow waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and was now

heading south again, to make a second attempt to enter the river which lay behind the forbidding, foam-dashed wall of Cape Disappointment.

Despite the information given him by the American, Vancouver believed that he could not have passed any "safe navigable opening." He had indeed noted in his journal, in passing Cape Disappointment, that he had not considered "this opening worthy of further attention." Gray's news impressed him therefore but slightly. He jotted down in regard to it: "If any river should be found, it must be a very intricate one and inaccessible to vessels of our burden." He pushed on northward. He discovered and explored Puget Sound, naming it after one of his lieutenants. He named Mount Baker in honor of another lieutenant who was the first man on board to descry that white crown of beauty. He explored the mainland of British Columbia and, circumnavigating the island that now bears his own name, swung down to Nootka where the Spanish Commissioner, Don Quadra, awaited him.

But of far greater moment was the feat which Robert Gray, the Yankee seaman and fur trader, had in the meantime accomplished. Gray had

run his ship past the spur of Cape Disappointment and into the mouth of the great river. This is the entry he made in his log, May 7, 1792:

Being within six miles of the land, saw an entrance in the same, which had a very good appearance of a harbor. . . . We soon saw from our masthead a passage in between the sand-bars. At half past three, bore away, and ran in north-east by east, having from four to eight fathoms, sandy bottom; and, as we drew in nearer between the bars, had from ten to thirteen fathoms, having a very strong tide of ebb to stem. . . . At five P.M. came to in five fathoms water, sandy bottom, in a safe harbor, well sheltered from the sea by long sand-bars and spits.

Within the harbor the *Columbia* was speedily surrounded by Indians in canoes, and trading continued briskly for several days. The canoes having departed, the *Columbia* "hove up the anchor, and came to sail and a-beating down the harbor." By the 11th of May, Gray was ready to attempt the entrance of the river itself. This is how he narrates that historic event:

At eight A.M. being a little to windward of the entrance of the Harbor, bore away, and run in east-north-east between the breakers, having from five to seven fathoms of water. When we were over the bar, we found this to be a large river of fresh water, un

which we steered. At one P.M. came to with the small bower, in ten fathoms, black and white sand. The entrance between the bars bore west-south-west, distant ten miles; the north side of the river a half mile distant from the ship; the south side of the same two and a half miles' distance; a village on the north side of the river west by north, distant three-quarters of a mile. Vast numbers of natives came alongside; people employed in pumping the salt water out of our water-casks, in order to fill with fresh, while the ship floated in. So ends.

Not an imaginative man, this Robert Gray, and no stylist. He had found the great River of the West. He had made fact of the myth beloved of the ancient mariners. And he sets down his discovery laconically as if it were no more than an incident of a trading voyage — just one brief matter-of-fact paragraph and *So ends!* It is almost, indeed, as if he considered the discovery of this river, which he named the *Columbia*, unimportant. Other sea wanderers had sought it; some of them had even fancifully charted it, so great had been their faith. Explorers, dreaming of vast inland seas and golden rivers, of jeweled cities to be discovered and of colonies to be founded — some of them scientific men, too — seeking this river had passed it by.

But, if Robert Gray was no writer, we may nevertheless, from his terse jottings, read the character of a man too literal-minded to suspect other men of the gift for artistic fable — a matter-of-fact man who reasoned that, if Bruno Heceta had felt the current made by a river, then the river which made the current was there — and, more, a man of plain courage, an experienced sailor with an impartial estimate of his own seamanship and with a mind not to be appealed to by the things that touch imaginative men with fear; one who saw merely winds to beat against and tides to gage and make use of, where other men saw a Cape Disappointment looming over the grave of ships.

Gray sold his furs in China and returned to Boston in 1793. The results must have fallen below expectations, for he was not sent out again. Kendrick of the *Lady Washington* was killed in Hawaii by a gun explosion. Gray's discovery apparently impressed the public little more than it had impressed Gray himself, for it was not followed up in any way for some years. Neither recognition nor wealth was bestowed upon the discoverer. Gray died in 1806 at Charleston, and he died in poverty.

CHAPTER II

LEWIS AND CLARK

THOUGH Gray suffered eclipse, and though the Government of the United States maintained an attitude of indifference towards his discovery, there was one American statesman with that vision of his nation's natural domain which had inspired the sweeping phrase "from sea to sea" in the charters granted to the first English colonists. Thomas Jefferson dreamed of expansion to the Pacific Ocean for at least twenty years before the way opened to put his desire into effect. In December, 1783, he had written on this matter to George Rogers Clark, whose military genius during the Revolution had given the young Republic its farthest western boundary. The fact that the British at this time entertained the idea of exploration overland apparently had its influence on Jefferson, for he wrote: I find they have subscribed a very large sum of money in England for exploring the country from the

Mississippi to California. They pretend it is only to promote knowledge. I am afraid they have thoughts of colonising into that quarter. Some of us have been talking here in a feeble way of making the attempt to search that country. But I doubt whether we have enough of that kind of spirit to raise the money. How would you like to lead such a party? tho I am afraid our prospect is not worth asking the question.

Jefferson's doubts as to the prospects were evidently justified, for nothing was done. Three years later in Paris, as American Minister, Jefferson listened sympathetically to a young countryman named John Ledyard, who had sailed with Cook and who was eager to cross the continent from the North Pacific. His plan included the establishment of trading posts and the exploration of the intervening unknown territory for the purpose of laying claim to it in the name of his country. Jefferson gave Ledyard the only assistance in his power, which was to request the Empress of Russia to permit Ledyard to cross her domains. She refused, but nevertheless the young explorer set out to traverse Siberia to Kamchatka, whence he was to go by sea to Nootka, and essay the crossing of the continent. In Siberia he was arrested by the Russian authorities, who were aware of his plans with regard to the fur trade,

and was carried back to Poland. He made his way to France and presently joined an exploring expedition bound for Africa. There he perished.

The American chronicles of these years are all but silent on the theme of Pacific exploration. In 1793, the year after Gray's discovery of the River of the West, Jefferson made a positive effort to set an expedition on the way to the Pacific by land. Again, as in 1783, apparently he did not find "enough of that kind of spirit to raise the money" among the elect of Congress, for it was the American Philosophical Society which responded to his plea. A French botanist named André Michaux was chosen to make the journey in the interests of science. If the selection of Michaux satisfied the American Philosophical Society, it did not at all please a certain Virginian youth who was one of Jefferson's friends. This youth, who was just finishing his education at a Latin school, was more than willing to forgo further literary wanderings in the company of Virgil's hero for the sake of writing in action an epic of his own on the virgin soil of the West. But Meriwether Lewis, at eighteen years of age, failed to convince the philosophers or Jefferson that he possessed the qualifications and experience requisite to make a success of the

venture. The wise men might better have entrusted their affair to this valiant American boy than to the Frenchman Michaux, for no sooner had the botanist reached Kentucky than his scientific mind revolted from the peaceful study of stamens and pistils and exercised itself busily with military intrigue.

Another decade elapsed without further progress, though the passing years were not without their events and their lessons. Spain conceded to Americans the right of navigation on the Mississippi; but, before the concession, the secret machinations of Spanish agents had kept the trans-Appalachian commonwealths in perpetual ferment. The diplomacy of Spain in respect to Kentucky and Tennessee, however, served the purpose of arousing the American authorities to the danger threatening the young Republic — the danger of being hemmed in on three sides by hostile powers and thus barred from expansion. In 1800 Spain secretly ceded Louisiana to France, stipulating that the territory should not be ceded to any other power without Spain's consent. The transfer became known to American statesmen and increased their uneasiness. On the north, in Canada, were the none too friendly British; to the south were

the Spanish; and now Louisiana, with its vast and undefined boundaries, had come into the possession of France — the militaristic France of Napoleon Bonaparte. And, in 1802, Napoleon was planning a military and colonizing expedition to New Orleans to strangle the commerce of the United States on the Mississippi and to occupy his new colonial empire lying between that river and the Rocky Mountains.

Meanwhile, in March, 1801, Jefferson had become President of the United States. He made two attempts to purchase from France and Spain New Orleans and the Floridas. His failure in both instances no doubt had not a little to do with the determination he reached in January, 1803, to send an expedition to the Pacific coast — to the mouth of that River of the West discovered in 1792 by Robert Gray. Because the expedition must proceed as far as the Rockies across country which lay within the vague boundaries of Louisiana and which therefore was foreign soil, its true character and intents must be kept secret. So Jefferson, in the private message sent by him to Congress, asked for an appropriation of \$2500 for a “literary pursuit.”

While other civilized nations have encountered great expense to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge by

undertaking voyages of discovery, and for other literary purposes, in various parts and directions, our nation seems to owe to the same object, as well as to its own interests, to explore this the only line of easy communication across the continent, and so directly traversing our own part of it. The interests of commerce place the principal object within the constitutional powers and care of Congress, and that it should incidentally advance the geographical knowledge of our own continent can not but be an additional gratification. The nation claiming the territory, regarding this as a literary pursuit, which it is in the habit of permitting within its dominions, would not be disposed to view it with jealousy. . . . The appropriation of \$2500 "for the purpose of extending the external commerce of the United States," while understood and considered by the Executive as giving the legislative sanction, would cover the undertaking from notice and prevent the obstructions which interested individuals might otherwise previously prepare in its way.

While Jefferson's expedition was in preparation in the spring of 1803, it happened that Napoleon experienced a change of heart in regard to Louisiana because the Mistress of the Seas was clearing her decks for war on him. Napoleon was now anxious to get rid not of New Orleans alone but of the whole territory. Whatever motives may have contributed to his swift decision, he took satisfaction in the belief that he had given England a rival that

should one day humble her pride. That no spirit of good-will towards the United States inspired him is evident from his remark that the Louisiana territory "shall one day cost dearer to those who oblige me to strip myself of it, than to those to whom I wish to deliver it."

In fact, Napoleon believed that he was selling to the United States, at a stiff price, a Pandora's Box of troubles. Some of his malign prophecies had a temporary fulfillment. In biblical language, which narrates evils as transient experiences, they "came to pass" — came and passed. And we may wonder today what thoughts would have agitated the mind of Napoleon if he could have seen the fleets of England and America keeping guard together in the North Sea while, on the soil of France, Britons from five lands fought side by side with Americans and Frenchmen for France; or could he have looked upon an American people unified from coast to coast and from the Rio Grande to the Canadian line, with little else than a yearly Mardi Gras Carnival at New Orleans to remind them that the Louisiana territory, forming now the greater part of thirteen States, was once in the possession of a hostile France and was sold to America with a curse.

Jefferson paid for Louisiana \$15,000,000. The treaty of purchase was signed in May, the month of England's declaration of war, and ratified by the Senate in October, 1803. It will be seen that Napoleon did not allow the conditions of his treaty with Spain to stand in his way. Spain, however, could do nothing but suffer indignantly. Jefferson's expedition to the mouth of the Columbia would make its way westward across all American territory. The Fates seemed propitious for the enterprise.

Having won the coöperation of Congress, Jefferson's next move was to select a leader. His choice fell upon that same young Virginian who, ten years before, had advanced his claim against that of the unstable French botanist. Meriwether Lewis since then had gone far to qualify himself for the great adventure. He had become a captain in the regular army and had taken a gallant part in the frontier wars; and, as Jefferson's private secretary since 1801, he had convinced the President of his fitness to lead the expedition. In Jefferson's *Memoir* we find the following:

I had now had opportunities of knowing him intimately. Of courage undaunted; possessing a firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities could divert from its direction; careful as a

father of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline; intimate with the Indian character, customs, and principles; habituated to the hunting life; guarded, by exact observation of the vegetables and animals of his own country, against losing time in the description of objects already possessed; honest, disinterested, liberal, of sound understanding, and a fidelity to truth so scrupulous that whatever he should report would be as certain as if seen by ourselves — with all these qualifications, as if selected and implanted by nature in one body for this express purpose, I could have no hesitation in confiding the enterprise to him.

Portraits of Lewis confirm Jefferson's description. They show a finely formed head and a face eloquent of courage, of integrity, and intelligence.

Lewis took up the desired task with energy. Conscious of his need of astronomy and natural science in order to make faithful geographical notes, he spent some time in Philadelphia "under tutorage of the distinguished professors of that place." He personally supervised the construction of the necessary boats and arms; and he wrote to his friend, William Clark, inviting him to join in the splendid adventure and offering him equality with himself in command and honors. William Clark, then with his brother, George Rogers Clark, at Clarksville, Tennessee, where Lewis desired him

to enlist frontiersmen for the expedition, accepted the invitation with a light-heartedness equal to his friend's. It is this enthusiasm, bubbling frequently into mirth, which makes Lewis and Clark's journals — even when the journals record days of peril and severe hardship — such live reading.

William Clark, born in Virginia in 1770, was four years older than Lewis. He had joined his brother, George Rogers, in Louisville at the age of fourteen and had fought in the Indian wars, first under his brother and later under Charles Scott and "Mad Anthony" Wayne. He was described in 1791 as "a youth of solid and promising parts, and as brave as Cæsar." He was a tall man, strongly built, with bright red hair and blue eyes; his brow was broad, his not handsome features were strongly marked, and the expression of his countenance was friendly and firm. As a young officer under Wayne he had acquitted himself with a dignity and an adroitness beyond his years on important missions to the Spanish authorities in Louisiana. But he was no scholar, as the original spelling in his journal shows.

The personnel of the expedition included forty-three men besides the two leaders. The men, nearly all of them young, were enlisted from among the

Kentucky frontiersmen and from the western garrisons. Among the Kentucky volunteers were sons, or other kin, of the men who had first crossed the Appalachians with Daniel Boone and who had held Kentucky through the bloody Indian raids of the Revolution and won the Illinois country under the leadership of George Rogers Clark. Some of the regular army men, indeed, were taken from the Kaskaskia garrison. One of the young frontiersmen was Charles Floyd, a kinsman of that John Floyd who fought in Dunmore's War, the war which pushed the white man's frontier from the Appalachians to the Ohio River — in the year 1774, the year of Meriwether Lewis's birth. The guide was a Frenchman named Charboneau, who brought with him his Indian wife Sacajawea, the Bird-Woman. Clark's servant York, a huge black man, accompanied his master. The three boats specially built to convey the expedition up the Missouri River were two pirogues and a bateau fifty-five feet long, which was propelled by a sail and twenty-two oars and boasted a forecastle and cabin. Besides arms and munitions, the bales in the boats contained presents for the Indians, mathematical instruments, medicines, meal, and pork, and a variety of camp equipment.

The explorers wintered at the mouth of the Wood River opposite the mouth of the Missouri, waiting till spring should dissolve the ice, breaking the routine of their camp by frequent hunting trips. On May 14, 1804, to quote Clark, having crossed the Mississippi, they "proceeded on under a Jentle brease up the Missourie." The speed of their boats, under favorable conditions, was from twelve to fifteen miles a day. On the afternoon of the sixteenth, Clark with the boats reached St. Charles, twenty-five miles up the stream, and here Lewis, who had been detained at St. Louis, joined him on the twentieth. They set out the next day, making slow progress because of shifting sand bars and crumbling cliffs. Once, at least, a falling bank almost swamped one of the pirogues and the men had to jump overboard and hold the boat steady until the current swept away the sand.

After four days of such travel they reached La Charette, a tiny village and the last outpost of civilization. Here Daniel Boone was living at this time, filling the office of syndic, or magistrate; and here the explorers hove to for the night, pitching camp just above the village. On the next day they said farewell to the last white habitation they were

to see until their return two years later and pushed on into the unknown.

Their troubles with sand bars, snags, and falling banks continued, but they met those troubles gaily. Frequently they stopped for hunting, for forty-five lusty explorers could consume a goodly quantity of fresh meat. They were not yet quite alone in the wilderness, for sometimes they met the descending pirogues of trappers and hunters who were bringing their winter's harvest of furs and deer-skins to St. Louis. From one of these parties they engaged an interpreter named Dorion to facilitate their intercourse with the Siouan tribes through whose territory they would pass.

By the middle of June, mosquitoes and flies were upon them in clouds. In places the driftwood and snags were so thick that they must chop their way through them. Their oars were already worn out and they were obliged to cut timber and shape new ones. On the twenty-sixth they reached the mouth of the Kansas River, having traveled some three hundred and forty miles from their starting point at the mouth of the Missouri. Where Kansas City stands now, Lewis and Clark found the lower villages of the Kaw or Kansas Indians, a tribe "not verry noumerous at this time," owing

to wars. An important part of Lewis's duties, in accordance with Jefferson's instructions, was to establish trade relations with the Indians along the route and to make them understand that the territory wherein they dwelt was now a part of the United States whose President was the Indians' Great Father. In the interests of science, as well as of commerce, Lewis was also to learn whatever he could of Indian habits and languages and to note the differences and similarities between the various tribes. His copious notes in *A Statistical View of the Indian Nations Inhabiting the Territory of Louisiana* furnish us, indeed, with the only information we have concerning some of the tribes of that time as they were before contact with the white race had changed them.

The Fourth of July was celebrated near the site of the present Atchison, Kansas, by firing a salute and by a dance. There was a fiddler among the men and he and his fiddle did their tuneful service on all occasions when there was a fête day to honor or when a succession of hardships had tinged the crew's mood with glumness. Throughout the whole march, when the shadow of defeat crept down, it was banished by a round of grog and the sound of the fiddle calling on the men to dance.

And they danced. Sometimes hungry, sometimes sure that the dangers already experienced had led them only into an impasse where they were about to perish, often sore-footed and spent, they danced — and all was well again. On this first Independence Day in the wilderness the captains not only ordered a salute and a dance, but they had a christening as well. They named two creeks Fourth-of-July and Independence. The latter still ripples under the name given it by its godfathers, Lewis and Clark, perhaps the first white men to spy its waters.

On the 3d of August Lewis held council with chiefs of the Otoes, a branch of the Pawnees, on a cliff about twenty miles above the present city of Omaha. This cliff Lewis and Clark named the Council Bluff. Lewis was the chief spokesman at the council, while Clark “Mad up a Small present for those people in perpotion to their Consiquence.” Speeches were made by the chiefs in answer to Lewis’s “talk,” and gifts were exchanged. With buffalo robes and painted skin tents the chiefs responded to the medals and gold-braided uniforms bestowed upon them. Here Liberté, a Frenchman, deserted and, although searched for, was not to be found; but a soldier, Reed, who attempted the

same thing was recaptured and punished by being made to run the gauntlet several times while being soundly beaten with rods. Lewis and Clark, in keeping with the ideas of their time, believed in severe penalties. Their journals record one other instance of insubordination — in which the culprit received seventy-five lashes on his bare back. Perhaps it is not surprising that there were so few incidents of the sort to set down.

Sometimes Lewis recorded the day's events; sometimes Clark was the diarist. Not only by the orthography (Clark spelled as he listed and capitalized adjectives or prepositions as the humor seized him) is it easy to trace each author. Lewis pictures Nature's handiwork with a touch of romance as well as with a carefulness of detail which shows that the instruction he received from the "distinguished professors" in Philadelphia has not been wasted. Clark's entries reveal the keen observation of the frontiersmen. His accuracy is a natural gift, trained solely by woodsman's experience and for practical purposes. A gorgeous sky does not leave him cold, but his first thought about it is concerned with its prophecy of weather. As for instance when he notes that "at Sunset the atmespier presented every appearance of wind,

Blue & White Streeks centiring at the Sun as She disappeared and the Clouds Situated to the S. W. Guilded in the most butifull manner." The "appearance of wind" was a matter of very practical import to the expedition which was being pushed up the stream by sail as well as by oars. It had its bearing on the safety of the night camp, and on the chances of the hunt. Generally in the same spirit, Clark notes rapids and bluffs and the outlines of banks and the quality of soils. A bad stretch of portage compels him to cast an appraising eye over the river falls which cause his discomfort. He is interested, too, in setting down the personal incidents and gossip of each day. So that in reading his entries we get illuminating sidelights on the characters and dispositions of the men as well as of their leaders. Clark's narrative, realistic and "human," runs side by side with Lewis's — with its scientific data, its flashes of wit, and its romantic enthusiasms — and supplements it in a way that makes the Lewis and Clark *Journals* a unique literary work and a perfect example of collaboration.

On the 20th of August, Clark records the only death which took place on the journey. Charles Floyd "Died with a great deel of composure. . . .

a butifull evening.” Today a tall obelisk on Floyd’s Bluff, Sioux City, Iowa, marks the grave of the first American who fell in that country in the cause of civilization.

As they neared the mouth of the Big Sioux River, the explorers heard from Dorion, the interpreter, an interesting story. Near the source of that river, he said, there was a creek which flowed in from the east between high cliffs of red rock. Of this red stone the Indians made their pipes. And, since pipes were a supreme necessity in both their domestic and political life, they had established a law under which that region was held sacred to peace. Tribes at war with each other met there to mine the brilliant stone, without the least show of hostility, and there an Indian fleeing from his foes might find sure refuge. Among these jagged red cliffs the fugitive was as one “between the horns of the altar.”

On the twenty-third, Fields, one of the party, had the honor of killing their first buffalo; and, a week or so later, Lewis shot an antelope and introduced the prairie dog to science. The journal here has a long account of the Dakota Sioux, with whom Lewis and Clark held councils. One of these councils threatened to turn out badly. Clark went

on shore "with a view of reconciling those men to us." The Indians seized a pirogue and were "very insolent both in words and justures" so that Clark drew his sword and made a signal to the boat to prepare for action. The Indians who surrounded him drew their arrows from their quivers and were bending their bows, when the swivel in the boat was instantly pointed toward them, and "those with me also Showed a Disposition to Defend themselves and me. I felt My Self warm & Spoke in very positive terms." The Sioux chief, impressed by this resolute front, ordered the warriors to draw back. Clark continues, "after remaining in this Situation Sometime I offered my hand to the 1. & 2. Chiefs who refused to receive it." Presently the chiefs changed their minds, however, as Clark turned away towards the boats. They waded in after him and he invited them on board. So, through a frank show of both warlike courage and good-will a peril was passed. The conclusion of Clark's story of the event discloses that strain of buoyancy in both leaders which must have been one of the strongest bonds of their friendship. After proceeding about a mile they anchored off a little island overgrown with willows which they called "bad humered Island as we were in a bad humer."

They had now been for some weeks in the big game country. Deer, buffalo, elk, antelopes, wolves, and bears were seen frequently in herds and packs. On the 19th of October they saw fifty-two herds of buffalo and three herds of elk. Two days later they passed the Heart River a little below the spot where a railway bridge now joins the towns of Bismarck and Mandan. Advance gusts from oncoming winter assailed the explorers as they hastened on, passing nine ruined villages of the Mandans in whose chief towns they intended to make their winter camp. They reached their destination on the twenty-sixth; and in the first week of the following month they began the building of their fort, on the east bank of the Missouri, about twenty miles beyond the present town of Washburn, North Dakota. They had traveled some sixteen hundred miles from their starting point.

A relict of the Mandan tribe lives today on the Fort Berthold reservation, but there are very few full-bloods among them. In 1804 the Mandans numbered over twelve hundred. They were sufficiently unlike the other plains tribes to cause much romantic speculation as to their origin. They were fairer skinned; and light hair was not uncommon among them. They wore their hair very long,

sometimes trailing to their heels. They lived in earthen houses, well built, circular in shape with slightly domed roofs. They were cultivators of the soil, with no lust for warfare; and consequently they were despised and raided by the ferocious Sioux. It was their boast, then and afterwards, that they had never shed the blood of a white man. Lewis and Clark were not the first white men they had entertained. The Canadian explorer La Vérendrye spent a part of December, 1738, with them. They were familiar with the traders of the North-West Company and of the Hudson's Bay Company. Some of these traders, indeed, came to the Mandan villages while Lewis and Clark were wintering there.

Buffalo hunts were among the diversions and duties of the winter months. Lewis had ample time to study the Mandans and to inscribe their legends and history as well as to collect and prepare specimens of various sorts to send to President Jefferson in the spring. To give a practical proof of the American Government's friendship for its Mandan children, Clark offered to go out with a number of the men of the expedition and a party of Indians to pursue and punish a band of Sioux who had attacked some Mandans. The Indians were

greatly pleased at this compliment; but, as the snow was thick and the going bad, they preferred to take the will for the deed. In February the exploring party was augmented by one papoose, a boy, his mother being Sacajawea, the young Indian wife of Toussaint Charboneau the guide.

On April 7, 1805, the explorers left Fort Mandan and pushed on up the Missouri in canoes and pirogues. The more imposing bateau was now headed down stream, manned by thirteen men who vowed to bring it safely to St. Louis. Its precious contents included, besides specimens, skins, Indian articles, buffalo robes, and other trophies for Jefferson, a report from Lewis and a copy of Clark's diary. The spirit which animated not only the leaders but the rank and file is attested to by Lewis in his letter to the President. Of the men who were to guide the bateau, Lewis wrote: "I have but little doubt but they will be fired on by the Sioux; but they have pledged themselves to us that they will not yeald while there is a man of them living."

Lewis and Clark's party now numbered thirty-two persons. Following the list of their names we read that Charboneau and his wife, with her infant, accompanied the expedition as "Interpreter

and interpretress.” Sacajawea was a Shoshone who had been captured when a child by Minnetarees and by them sold as a slave to Charboneau. The old *voyageur* brought her up and afterwards married her. From now on we are to find the young Indian woman, Sacajawea, gradually taking a prominent part in the councils of the expedition.

On the 26th of April the explorers passed the mouth of the Yellowstone River and gave it its English name, translated from the French *roche-jaune*. Three days later Lewis had a lively encounter with two “brown or yellow bears” of a sort new to him. One of these animals, wounded by Lewis, pursued him for “seventy or eighty yards” but only to its own death, for Lewis managed to reload and kill it — and so made the scientific discovery of the grizzly bear. From now on “yellow” bears, “white” bears, and “brown” bears, all variously tinted grizzlies, appeared with disturbing frequency, and whenever they caught sight of an explorer they gave chase. One brown-furred guardian of the wild, with seven bullets in him, forced the intruding hunters to throw down their guns and pouches and leap twenty feet into the river; he plunged in after his foes and had all but snapped upon the hindmost when a shot from

the shore put the eighth ball in him and ended the chase. This happened on the 14th of May. It was surely a day of tests for the explorers. While the hunters were fleeing from Bruin, a squall struck a canoe under sail and upset it, with the assistance of Charboneau, who completely lost his head: "Charbono cannot swim and is perhaps the most timid waterman in the world." Fortunately the little vessel, which contained "our papers, instruments, books, medicine . . . and in short almost every article indispensibly necessary to further the views, or insure the success of the enterprise in which we are now launched to the distance of 2200 miles" was not completely overturned. But the lighter articles were washed overboard and were saved only by the cool courage and nimble fingers of Charboneau's wife, the Bird-Woman, who snatched back most of them from the hungry stream. In this merry fashion did the explorers celebrate the anniversary of their setting out from the mouth of the Wood River.

The Missouri now wound about the base of tall cliffs of white sandstone sculptured by wind and water into grotesque shapes. Perhaps it was this remarkable environment that stirred the practical Clark into a romantic mood and led him to

christen a stream they passed presently, "Judith's River," in honor of the lady of his heart whom he afterwards married. Clark was one of those to whom a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; the lady's name was, in fact, Julia Hancock, not Judith. Nevertheless the Judith River still marks the map of Montana in her memory. A little later Lewis also complimented a lady, his cousin Maria Wood, though the turbulent waters of Maria's River (now written Marias) "but illy comport with the pure celestial virtues and amiable qualifications of that lovely fair one."

At Maria's River, on the 2d of June, they came to a halt, for they did not know which of the two streams was the Missouri. Here the party divided. Lewis with six men set off to investigate Maria's River, and Clark proceeded up the south fork, the Missouri. Both leaders had serious encounters with grizzly bears, besides other difficulties, before they returned to the forks; but they returned of one mind, convinced that the south fork was the Missouri. What manner of leaders they were is revealed in the fact that their party willingly turned up the south fork with them, although all the men were also of one mind, but in the opposite conviction.

Leaving Clark in charge of the boats, Lewis proceeded up the river on foot, until he heard a distant rush of waters and saw spray rise above the plain like a column of smoke and immediately vanish. The noise, increasing as he approached, soon "began to make a roaring too tremendous for any cause short of the great falls of the Missouri." Then the Falls came into view. Lewis hurried down the banks of the river, which were two hundred feet high and "difficult of access," and sat on a rock below the center of the Falls to enjoy "this truly magnificent and sublimely grand object, which has from the commencement of time been concealed from the view of civilized man." The Great Falls were more than a sublime spectacle to Lewis and Clark; they were proof positive that the explorers were on the true Missouri, heading towards the passes that led into the region of the Columbia River.

While waiting for the boats, Lewis explored the surrounding country, and he crowded a great deal of excitement into the few days. He shot a buffalo and was waiting to see it drop when he discovered a brown bear within twenty steps of him. He had forgotten to reload, so that there was nothing for it but flight. The bear, open-mouthed, pursued him,

gaining fast. The plain was bare of trees or brush. Lewis decided that his only chance was to plunge into the river and force the bear to attack under the handicap of swimming. His ruse was successful. But a little later, as he continued his explorations, three buffalo bulls ran at him. Lewis writes: "I thought at least to give them some amusement and altered my direction to meet them; when they arrived within a hundred yards they made a halt, took a good view of me and retreated with precipitation." He now pushed rapidly through the dark towards camp to escape from a place which "from the succession of curious adventures" seemed to him an enchanted region. "Sometimes for a moment I thought it might be a dream, but the prickley pears which pierced my feet very severely once in a while . . . convinced me that I was really awake." He made his bed that night under a tree and awoke in the morning to find a large rattlesnake coiled on the trunk just above him.

Clark, with the boats, was meeting dangers of another sort. "We set out at the usual time and proceeded on with great difficulty . . . the current excessively rapid and difficult to assend great numbers of dangerous places, and the fatigue which we have to encounter is incretiatable the men in the

water from morning until night hauling the cord & boats walking on sharp rocks and round slippery stones which alternately cut their feet & throw them down, notwithstanding all this difficulty they go with great cheerfulness, added to those difficulties the rattlesnakes innumerable & require great caution to prevent being bitten." Of the five falls on the Missouri two received from Lewis and Clark the names they still bear — Great Falls and Crooked Falls.

At this point, of course, navigation became impossible. To reach free water again it was necessary to make a portage of about seventeen miles. The men shaped wheels from the one lone cottonwood tree on the bank and made axles and tongues of willow and other light woods within reach. With these they moved the laden canoes across the rough surface of the plain which was dented deep by the hoofs of the buffalo. The hard dried edges of the dents tortured the men's moccasined feet and made hauling difficult and slow. The tongues and axles broke repeatedly and had to be renewed. But the men were helped sometimes by high winds, which blew the canoes under sail at a good pace over the earth. They had stumbled across rough country for thirteen

days when at last they reached the launching point above the Falls. Then, while Cruzatte, the French *voyageur*, scraped his fiddle, all who could make use of their feet had a dance on the green.

On the 29th of June, Clark, Charboneau, and the Bird-Woman and her baby almost lost their lives in a cloud-burst. They had taken refuge from the rain in a narrow ravine when suddenly a torrent descended upon them. "The rain appeared to descend in a body and instantly collected in the rivene and came down in a roling torrent with irresistible force driving rocks mud and everything before it which opposed it's passage. Capt C fortunately discovered it a moment before it reached them and seizing his gun and shot pouch with his left hand with his right he assisted himself up the steep bluff shoving occasionally the Indian woman before him who had her child in her arms; Sharbono had the woman by the hand indeavoring to pull her up the hill but was so much frightened that he remained frequently motionless and but for Capt C both himself and his woman and child must have perished." The water rose so swiftly that it was up to Clark's waist before he had begun to climb and "he could scarcely ascend faster than it arrose till it had obtained the debth of 15 feet

with a current tremendous to behold. One moment longer & it would have swept them into the river just above the cataract of 87 feet where they must have inevitably perished." In this adventure Clark lost his compass, Charboneau dropped his gun, shot pouch, and powder-horn, and the Bird-Woman had barely time to grasp her baby before the net in which it lay at her feet was swept away. Some of the men had been out on the plain when the storm broke and the heavy hail, driven upon them by the violent wind, had felled several of them so that they were "bleeding freely and complained of being much bruised."

The explorers had been for some time, of course, in sight of the Rocky Mountains, and, while not unimpressed by the grandeur and beauty of the great range, they were doubtless thinking more of the passes among the peaks which they must find and penetrate. On the 13th of July, they took stream again at a point about three miles above the present city of Great Falls, Montana; and on the twenty-fifth they reached Three Forks, the confluence of the three rivers which unite their waters to form the Missouri. These rivers were named by Lewis and Clark the Madison, the Jefferson, and the Gallatin.

They were now in the country of the Snakes, or Shoshones, the Bird-Woman's people. Near by Sacajawea pointed out the very spot where she had been captured. Eagerly she watched for signs of her tribe, minutely examining deserted brush wickiups to discern how recently they had been tenanted, straining her eyes for smoke signals among the blue mists on the mountains.

Sacajawea, searching the sunlit horizon or looking wistfully out into the dusk as it drifted down and extinguished her hope of that day, was little understood by the two busy leaders, who had already noted in their journal that, true to the Indian character, she viewed the old scenes with indifference. But her preoccupation provoked her lord and master, so that one evening he dealt her a blow, for which Clark gave him a "severe reprimand."

At length, after navigating the shallows and canyons of the Jefferson to a point near the present town of Dillon, Montana, the explorers met with a company of famishing Shoshones, pressing on eastward to the buffalo grounds along the Missouri. Lewis, exploring by land, had found them first and with difficulty had persuaded them to remain to greet the boat party. These Indians

were so often the prey of the fierce Blackfeet that they were intensely nervous and suspicious. The appearance of the boats reassured them, and so great was the relief of their frightened chief that he fell upon Lewis's neck and repeatedly embraced him till he was "besmeared with their grease" and "heartily tired of the national hug." The party disembarked. The eager Bird-Woman raced ahead and presently, says Clark, "danced for the joyful sight," as she held out her arms to a young woman who rushed towards her. The two had been companions in childhood and had also been together in captivity.

The Shoshone chief took Lewis and Clark to his lodge. His warriors quickly marked a small circle in the sod, in the center of the tent, by tearing up the bunch grass; and here Indians and white men seated themselves on green boughs covered with antelope skins. Then the sacred pipe was brought. Clark was enough impressed with this pipe to make a drawing of it; and, from his picture and written description, we can see its long stem and its large bowl of green stone, polished like crystal and gleaming like jade, as the chief slowly gestured with it to the four points of the compass. But though the white men knew that the chief meant

them well because he had taken off his moccasins — as one who said, “May I forever go bare-foot if I deal not truly with you” — yet they could not make their needs known to him. And those needs were great. For here, at the foot of the high Mountains of Bright Stones, all their hopes would end unless this chief could be influenced to guide them through the pass. They knew that it would not be easy to persuade him to part with horses enough for their party and baggage; and, as they regarded his “fierce eyes and lank jaws grown meagre from the want of food,” they doubted if anything they could offer would induce him and his starving tribe to turn back from their hunting trip. So Sacajawea was sent for, not only to interpret but to plead, as a Shoshone, with her kin to open the sealed door in that great stone barrier that the white men might go on to the wide waters of the River of the West.

It was surely a dramatic moment for the Bird-Woman when she slipped into the formal council circle, with head bent and eyes downcast as became a woman among chiefs. But a keener experience was in store for her. As the chief began to speak, telling the white men that not by his war name but by his peace name, Cameahwait, or Come and

Smoke, would he be known to them, the Bird-Woman recognized her brother. She sprang up with a cry, ran to him, and threw her blanket about him, weeping. The chief also was deeply moved by this strange meeting, and for a brief moment the white men caught a glimpse of the universal human heart beating behind the racial barrier. "The meeting of those people was really affecting," Lewis writes. Lewis and Clark could only guess at the meaning of Sacajawea's long earnest speech to her brother, but they could heartily rejoice at its results, for the chief agreed to fulfill all their desires.

The explorers had now to adapt their outfit to overland travel; so they set about making pack-saddles. For nails they used rawhide thongs; and, for boards, oar handles and the planks of some of their boxes encased in rawhide. While the crew, assisted by the Indian men, were at this task, the Indian women were busy mending the white men's moccasins. Though the chief had promised that the Shoshones would help transport the baggage and see the party safely over the mountains, yet on the day before the departure he secretly prepared to go down the Missouri to the buffalo grounds. Taxed with his double-dealing, he admitted it to Lewis regretfully, explaining that the

tribe's food supply had come to an end and that, seeing his people in want, he had forgotten his promise to the white men, which, however, he would now fulfill at all costs. In this incident we get a pure white flash of the young Bird-Woman's character, for, despite her joy in the reunion with her kin, her loyalty to Lewis and Clark moved her to betray to them the change in her brother's plans which so menaced the success of the expedition.

Moved by these experiences among the Shoshones, Lewis, in one of his most thoughtful moods, thus records his birthday, the 18th of August:

This day I completed my thirty-first year, and conceived that I had in all human probability now existed about half the period which I am to remain. . . . I had as yet done but little . . . to further the happiness of the human race, or to advance the information of the succeeding generation. I viewed with regret the many hours I have spent in indolence and now soarily feel the want of that information which those hours would have given me had they been judiciously expended. But since they are past and cannot be recalled, I dash from me the gloomy thought, and resolved, in future, to redouble my exertions and at least endeavour to promote those two primary objects of human existence, by giving them the aid of that portion of talents which nature and fortune have bestowed on me; or in future, to live *for mankind*, as I have heretofore lived *for myself*.

The party crossed the backbone of the Rockies through the Lemhi Pass and entered a wild country of deep gorges, mad streams, and thickly wooded mountain flanks. Here Sacajawea's kinsmen took leave of the white men and returned to the eastern side of the range — all but one old Shoshone who consented to remain and guide the expedition, for the explorers had still to encounter grave perils before the navigable waters of the Columbia River would ease their travel. Clark spent a week in fruitless explorations of the branches of the Lemhi and the Salmon in Idaho. There was no clear river highway here. The expedition then pushed northwest through the hills and, veering east, passed the Continental Divide into Montana again. Here Lewis and Clark had friendly encounters with Nez Percés and Flathead or Salish Indians. On the 7th of September they camped south of the present Grantsdale, Montana. They pressed on northward to Lo Lo Creek, named by them Travelers Rest, and crossed again into Idaho through the Lo Lo Pass. Heading towards the Clearwater, the Shoshone guide sometimes mistook the trail and it seems that the expedition floundered about. The men suffered from hunger, from cold and fatigue. They were obliged to kill a horse occasionally for

food. Sometimes the main party halted, while Clark with some of the hunters went out searching for a way out of the maze of foaming streams and snow-crowned precipices. But by the twenty-sixth all were safely camped on the Clearwater. Both leaders and men were very ill from the privations they had undergone; nevertheless they began building canoes at once. On the 7th of October they were headed down the river and three days later they camped near its mouth. Then, launching their canoes on the Snake, they came on the sixteenth to the mouth of that river which pours its waters into the Columbia itself. Here Indians, as though to celebrate the great event — the significance of which they could not have grasped had it been told to them — collected in numbers to receive the white men. “A Chief came from this camp which was about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile up the Columbia river at the head of about 200 men singing and beating on their drums Stick and keeping time to the musik, they formed a half circle around us and Sung for Some time.”

On the 18th of October Lewis and Clark floated out upon the River of the West. They portaged the Celilo Falls on the twenty-third and took stream again in that stretch of the river known as

the Dalles where the water runs over lava beds and between grotesquely carved lava cliffs. The navigators presently saw ahead of them a tremendous rock stretching across the river leaving a channel "between two rocks not exceeding *forty five* yards wide" through which the whole body of the Columbia must press its way. A portage here was considered by Clark "impossible with our Strength"; he therefore "determined to pass through this place notwithstanding the horrid appearance of this agitated gut swelling, boiling & whorling in every direction, which from the top of the rock did not appear as bad as when I was in it; however we passed Safe." Two days later they passed the Long Narrows, where their canoes were nearly swamped by the boiling tide, and camped on Quinett Creek near the present city of The Dalles. Then one more bad stretch of water, the Cascades, must be portaged before the ease of continuous unobstructed navigation was theirs. On the 7th of November, according to Clark, there was "Great joy in camp, we are in *view* of the *Ocian*, . . . this great Pacific Ocean which we have been so long anxious to See, and the roaring or noise made by the waves breaking on the rocky shores . . . may be heard distinctly."

It would seem that what they saw, however, was not the ocean but the mouth of the Columbia, which is over a dozen miles wide at this point below the site of the future Astoria. They now experienced the ocean swells which roll through the river here and also the blowing rain and fog characteristic of the Northwest Coast. Their first camp was on Point Ellice, called by Clark Point Distress. Here for several days they were not only drenched to the skin but pelted with stones which the rains loosened from the hillside. In this wretched condition they remained, wet and cold, and with only a little dried fish to satisfy their hunger. The men were scattered on floating logs or trying to shelter themselves in the crevices of the bank. Here also "we found great numbers of flees which we treated with the greatest caution and distance." The weather cleared on the 15th of November and the explorers moved round the point into Baker's Bay, where they built shelters for themselves with the timbers from the walls of an abandoned Indian village. Their journey had occupied eighteen months and had covered four thousand miles. On the rugged wilderness from the mouth of the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean, Lewis and Clark and their loyal band had written America's

greatest epic of adventure. Here they were now at the mouth of Robert Gray's river; and presently we see the indefatigable Clark climbing joyously to the top of Meares's Cape Disappointment. On one side of him rolls a free sea; on the other stretches a wooded cliff line which shall be the western shore of the United States.

Lewis and Clark wintered among the Clatsop Indians, south of the Columbia, a few miles up the Lewis and Clark River, where Lewis pursued his ethnological studies and the others passed the time in hunting and exploring.

On March 23, 1806, the expedition turned homewards. On the 30th of June, having recrossed the Great Divide through Lo Lo Pass and reached Travelers Rest Camp, a mile above the mouth of Lo Lo Creek, the leaders decided on the dangerous plan of separating the party to make explorations. On the 1st of July Lewis wrote:

From this place I determined to go with a small party by the most direct rout to the falls of the Missouri, there to leave [three men] to prepare carriages and geer for the purpose of transporting the canoes and baggage over the portage, and myself and six volunteers to ascend Maria's river with a view to explore the country and ascertain whether any branch of that river lies as far north as Lat^d 50. and again

return and join the party who are to descend the Missouri, at the entrance of Maria's river . . . the other part of the men are to proceed with Capt Clark to the head of Jefferson's river where we deposited sundry articles and left our canoes. from hence Sergt Ordway with a party of 9 men are to descend the river with the canoes; Capt C with the remaining ten including Charbono and York will proceed to the Yellowstone river at it's nearest approach to the three forks of the Missouri, here he will build a canoe and descend the Yellowstone river with Charbono the indian woman, his servant York and five others to the missouri where should he arrive first he will wait my arrival. Sergt Pryor with two other men are to proceed with the horses by land to the Mandans and thence to the British posts on the Assinniboin [Clark says, "the tradeing Establishments of the N W Co'"] . . . to prevail on the Sioux to join us on the Missouri.

In consequence of this daring plan, which was not fully carried out in detail, the party was separated for six weeks. Lewis explored Maria's River and found that it had no branches reaching to the fiftieth parallel. His excursion, however, was not uneventful, for he exchanged shots with the warlike Blackfeet and later was shot accidentally and painfully wounded by Cruzatte, the fiddler, who mistook his leader for a deer. The Bird-Woman accompanied Clark's party. It was she who recognized signs obliterated to other eyes, who pointed

out the true passes in the maze of hills and ravines and guided the party safely to Three Forks. From Three Forks Clark set out to explore the Yellowstone River to its mouth. On the journey he mapped many points now famous, such as the Big Horn mountains and river, the plain where Custer's monument now stands, and the huge rock called Pompey's Pillar on which Clark's signature and the date cut in with his knife are still legible. He lost all his horses, which were silently rounded up and driven away by Crow Indians. Descending the river, near the present city of Glendive, Clark and his men were forced to halt for an hour because the river, though a mile wide, was occupied from shore to shore by the crossing of a buffalo herd. The next day they witnessed the crossing of two herds.

One of Clark's companions was John Colter. This man returned to the Yellowstone River in 1807, and was, so far as is known, the first white explorer of the mountains of Wyoming between the Big Horn Range and the Idaho border. He discovered the Three Tetons and Yellowstone Lake and some part at least of Yellowstone Park.

By the 14th of August Lewis and Clark were once more among the Mandans with whom they

had spent their first winter on the trail. Here Colter left them to return to the wilderness. And here they parted with Sacajawea and her family, since Charboneau desired to remain among the Mandans. Clark writes: "I offered to take his little son, a butifull promising child who is 19 months old to which they both himself & wife were willing provided the child had been weened."

Lewis and Clark reached St. Louis at noon, September 23, 1806, announcing their approach by firing of cannon. All St. Louis, hearing the splendid noise, rushed down to the bank to greet them. The welcome, Clark says, was "harty." On the next day they wrote letters, Clark to his brother, Lewis to Jefferson; and Drouillard, one of the crew, sprinted off with them to overtake the mounted postman. The explorers then sallied forth to procure new attire, which they sadly needed. They bought cloth and took it to a "tayler." On the twenty-fifth they "payed" visits and in the evening were honored by a "dinner & Ball." The next day Clark jotted down the last line of the great epic: "A fine morning we commenced wrighting &c."

In 1807 Meriwether Lewis was appointed Governor of Louisiana Territory. Two years later,

while riding along the Natchez Trace on his way to Washington and accompanied only by his servant, a Spaniard, he paused for the night at a lonely inn, seventy-two miles below Nashville in Lewis County, Tennessee. Here he was shot. For a long time the impression prevailed that he had taken his own life in a fit of depression. Later investigations, however, have led to the conclusion that he was robbed and murdered by the half-caste, Grinder, who kept the inn. But the belief of Lewis's family was that the Governor had been done away with by his Spanish servant, not only for the money on his person but for the sake of certain documents which Lewis was taking to Washington. Whether Lewis fell a victim to the rapacity of the ill-reputed Grinder, or whether his death was but one more knot in the intricate skein of Spanish intrigue, will now, probably, never be known. But, at least, the theory of suicide no longer beclouds his fame. His body was buried beside the Trace near the spot where death found him. In 1848, the State of Tennessee raised a monument of marble over the grave. Even today the scene is a wild one. Forest, uninvaded by axe or plow, closes about the broken column which marks the place of Meriwether Lewis's last sleep on trail.

William Clark survived his friend for thirty years. His was a life crowded with useful activities. A year after his return he entered the fur trade. He was appointed Governor of Missouri Territory in 1813 and retained the office until Missouri was admitted to statehood in 1820. Later he became Superintendent of Indian Affairs and held that post until his death. He had already, on his western journey, established among the Indians a reputation for courage, justice, and friendship. His influence with the tribes was probably greater than that of any other white man since Sir William Johnson of colonial days. The name of "Red Head" was loved and revered in every lodge and wickiup from the Mississippi to the Pacific. As Governor and as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, his executive ability, shrewd common sense, and his farsightedness, integrity, and humanity made his official acts constructive incidents in the growth of the American commonwealth.

In his personal relations he was loyal, affectionate, and generous. In behalf of his brother he addressed dignified and just appeals to the Virginian authorities for payment of the debts which George Rogers Clark had contracted in the equipment of his Illinois campaigns. And when

Virginia would not pay, and George Rogers Clark could not, William Clark assumed the burden. It was his insistence that won at last a small pension for his brother. He also paid notes of Lewis's which had been protested, so that the honor of his dead friend should not be smirched. We know that he did not wish to forget the Bird-Woman who had guided him safely to Three Forks on his homeward journey, since he offered to adopt and educate the son born to her on the march, and presumably also he was responsible for the appointment of old Charboneau as interpreter at the Missouri Sub-Agency in 1837.

William Clark married twice and was the father of seven children. His first wife was the lady for whom, as he supposed, he had named Judith River. He died in 1838, aged sixty-eight years, and he was buried in Missouri.

Clark lived to see great changes come to Missouri after the transfer of the territory to American rule. Then St. Louis was only a small village, backward in comparison with any American settlement of its size, and La Charette, some forty odd miles to the northwest, was the farthest frontier. But in 1838 there were many thriving American settlements in Missouri, and St. Louis

was the emporium of a vast trade in furs, the arteries of which ran through that great wilderness first mapped and in part first explored by Lewis and Clark.

CHAPTER III

THE REIGN OF THE TRAPPER

THE fur trade of North America — which encouraged and sustained the earliest French and English explorations inland, which was the chief spoil fought for in the colonial wars, and which swept across the continent, the forerunner of colonization, to see the last days of its glory in Old Oregon — began as an accident. It was not furs in the first place that brought Europeans adventuring on the northern shores of the New World. Immediately in the wake of those earliest mariners searching for the pathway to the East came other sea rovers to fish for cod. This takes us back to Sebastian Cabot. Sebastian returned from the second English voyage to America — the voyage of 1498 — with marvelous fish stories, which so stirred the watermen of Europe that fishing vessels from England, France, and Portugal were soon on the Banks of Newfoundland. Presently Spaniards

joined them, and it was not long before Basque whalers from the Bay of Biscay were wrestling with Leviathan in American waters. The French seem to have led all the rest, even as they were later to lead the way as trappers and fur traders.¹ The fishing fleets went out in April and returned in August. The industry was divided, then as now, into "green" and "dry." The dry-cod fishers built platforms on shore on which they split and dried their fish. Each ship had its own station to which its crew returned year after year. And these dry-cod fishers, who lived partly on shore for three months of every fishing season, were the first white men to trade with the Indians for furs.

We should not turn away too quickly from the picture of the first Indian who stepped forward to offer a beaver pelt to a man of our race in exchange for some trinket made in Europe. That picture illustrates the opening chapter of a great romance. The Indian's gesture beckons the white man to the free march of the forest trail and the rhythmic glide of the birch canoe. His beaver pelt is a sign

¹ By 1578 the French had 150 vessels off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland — as against 100 Spanish, 50 Portuguese, 25 Basque, and 50 English vessels — and in 1603, four years prior to the Jamestown settlement, they had nearly 600 ships on the Banks. See H. P. Biggar, *Early Trading Companies of New France*.

pointing northward, southward, westward. All trails lead to the beaver lands; and, in following them, the trapper shall pierce to the Frozen Sea and to the Ocean of the Setting Sun. And, beside those great inland waters of which the old mariners dreamed, his camp fire shall glow like a star dropped upon the waste.

It was the French who first caught the vision of the fur trade. The Dutch bartered with the Indians at Manhattan and far up the Hudson. And English traders were the first pathfinders across the Appalachians. But it was Frenchmen who, in advance of all others, pursued the little beaver into the wilds of the continent. If the goal they sought was the legendary strait, their activities were quickened and supported by the fur trade. It was as fur traders that Champlain and his associates explored the region of the Great Lakes. It was the beaver that lured on Radisson and Groseilliers, the first white men to reach the prairies beyond the Great Lakes and probably the first to pass overland to Hudson Bay. Again it was the beaver that made possible the exploration of the Mississippi by Joliet and Marquette and La Salle, and the discovery of the Saskatchewan, and of the Black Hills of South Dakota by La Vérendrye.

Before New France fell the French had established trading posts reaching from Montreal up the Great Lakes, across to the Lake of the Woods, on to Lake Winnipeg, and up the Saskatchewan as far as the Rocky Mountains. By a chain of forts circling southward, from the head of Lake Ontario, they dominated the Ohio, the Wabash, the Wisconsin, and the Illinois. They were on the Arkansas, the Red, the Osage, and the Kansas. Through Kaskaskia, New Orleans, Fort Alabama, and their itinerant trade with the tribes from Tennessee to the Gulf, they were masters of the Mississippi.

For the Frenchman in Old Canada the life of the wilderness had an irresistible lure. In vain the authorities at Quebec tried to compel him to live within the settlements and cultivate the soil. The glamor of the woods drew him away to follow the beaver with the Indian trappers. He married among the Indians and reared his children in their lodges. Thus there sprang up that new and entirely unique type of man, the *coureur-de-bois*, or trapper, and his complement and companion, the *voyageur*, or canoeman — rovers of the forest; first offspring of France in the New World; speaking two mother tongues; care free and good-humored; disdainful of hardship and danger; and indifferent

to all education other than the Indian's lore. The governor might ban them; the priest might deplore their impiety; but through them France wielded the first great fur empire of North America.

This, however, was not an undisputed empire. There was soon an English rival in the field — a rival for which two Frenchmen were responsible. It was in the summer of 1666 that those intrepid wanderers and traders, Radisson and Groseilliers, having fallen foul of the Governor at Quebec in the matter of trading licenses, found themselves — after a series of vicissitudes — in London. Out of ruin, persecution, and shipwreck, they entered into a city of gloom. London lay under the pall of the Great Plague. The gay monarch, Charles II, had fled to Oxford and was holding court there, surrounded by his favorite nobles and his best beloved ladies. But the King was bored; he found life at Oxford very dull; so he welcomed the chance of hearing the two French castaways tell their marvelous tales of adventure in the New World. He enjoyed their stories — thought them so good as to be worth forty shillings a week for the rest of the year, a very fair pension indeed for a couple of entertainers in those days.

By the winter of 1666-67 fire had swept London

clean of contagion, and the King and his courtiers returned to the city. Once in London and still under the royal favor, the merry monarch's two entertainers became the rage. Prince Rupert, the King's Admiral and cousin, just home from the Dutch Wars, was much taken with them. So were the aldermen and the high patrons of commerce; for, though the Dutch wars had given to England the Dutch colony of New Netherland on the Hudson, they had been disastrous to English trade upon the sea; and patriotic and practical Englishmen were looking all ways for means to recoup their losses. So Radisson and Groseilliers (the latter appears in the records as "Mr. Gooseberry"); were invited to castle, tavern, and coffee-house to expound their views on the fur trade over roasted pullets.

This abundant feasting and story-telling had its *dénouement*, first, in a voyage to the shores of Hudson Bay to establish the verity of the Frenchmen's tales as to the trading opportunity in that region, which was English by right of Hudson's discovery in 1610, and, secondly, in a charter given under the King's seal in 1670, granting unto his cousin Prince Rupert and seventeen courtiers, designated as the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of

England trading into Hudson's Bay," in feudal domain, all the lands drained by waters flowing into that great inland sea. This charter, giving away an empire almost half the size of Europe, the King signed with his quill pen. He was richly garbed for the ceremony in the new style of coat and vest designed by himself. He was in a happy frame of mind, for now he had an antidote for the tantrums of milady Castlemaine in the warm-hearted gaiety of "pretty witty Nellie," as the diarist Pepys calls Nell Gwyn. Surrounding the King, as he affixed his royal signature to the instrument, stood the "gentlemen-adventurers" named therein, among them the weak James, Duke of York, afterwards King, and the martial Rupert, soldier, sailor, and artist, a man of power, and the outstanding figure of the group. Had Rupert been King instead of that pretty philanderer in the chair, perhaps the course of these eventful years would have been better for England. But who can know? What one of that brilliant group imagined that the Company they formed would long outlive the Stuart dynasty? It was decreed that the territory granted under the charter should henceforth be known as Rupert's Land. But, though the Company of which Rupert was the first Governor still flourishes,

there is no Rupert's Land mentioned on any map of that country today.

The Company sent ships to Hudson Bay and built forts on the Nelson and Hayes rivers and on James Bay. Yearly three vessels sailed from England with goods and returned laden with furs. Unlike the French traders, the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company did not range the woods to trade but lived in feudal state within their stockaded forts and waited for the Indians to come to them. As a group of Indians approached one of the forts, the commander and his subordinates would emerge to greet them. The commander wore a periwig, a sword, and a silken cloak. His manner was courteous and aloof, his discourse dignified and straightforward. The Indians quickly learned to know him as a man of his word and a trader who had one price and no rum. This way of trading worked very well for a short time. But one year it was noticed that fewer Indians were coming to trade; the next year there were fewer still. The reason was soon learned. Canadian traders, branching north from the St. Lawrence, were intercepting the tribes and getting their furs.

These Canadians, a company of stout traders and dare-devils as reckless and unscrupulous as ever

ranged the wilds, saw that English frost on the shores of Hudson Bay threatening blight to the lilies of France. But this was the year 1686, and France and England were at peace. And could some hundred armed men pass through the gates of Quebec on their dash to Hudson Bay without the cognizance of the Governor? They could, if the Governor would look over his other shoulder. Beautiful indeed were the gates of Quebec to the eyes of every loyal Canadian; but were there not other fine views to be admired from the castle windows? Evidently the Governor thought so, for a raiding force was presently on its way overland to Hudson Bay. With the marauders, dressed as Indians, went three Le Moynes, young men in their twenties, one of them that Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville later to win fame on land and sea as the most illustrious fighter of New France and as the founder of the colony of Louisiana which Jefferson was to add to the United States.

Swiftly, by forest, stream, and swamp, the raiders sped northward until they reached the outskirts of the English Fort Moose on the shore of James Bay. Lurking low in the shadows of the moonlit brush fringe, Iberville took note of the drowsy sentry. Then he darted forward, his moccasined feet

noiseless on the sod, and plunged his dagger through the watchman's throat. The snoring traders within the fort woke to the firing of guns, the clink of steel, and the yells of savage men leaping and clambering over the bastions. Before the sleep was out of their eyes, their fort was lost — and with it their great packs of furs. Fort Moose was only the beginning. All the forts on the Bay save one were looted by the raiders, who then returned to Quebec as fast as they could travel under their burden of furs.

The Adventurers of England carefully transcribed their losses in neat columns and doggedly set the helm of their fortunes once more for the scene of their disaster, only to meet again with the same fate. One summer day, as the supply ships from England sailed into the Bay against a stiff wind, they spoke a vessel wafting out merrily under full canvas with the Union Jack at her masthead. Homeward bound! "A goode wind and a faire sail to her!" They plodded on — to anchor before forts looted and wrecked. It was indeed one of their own ships that had sailed by them, packed deep with furs; but the skipper of that ship was Iberville, the raider.

Iberville made his last visit to Hudson Bay in

1697, before the Peace of Ryswick. Now that France and England were at war, he wore, not the fringed buckskin of a *coureur-de-bois*, but the uniform of a naval officer of France, and he commanded the *Pelican*, a French man-of-war. He fought three armed English vessels on the Bay and defeated them after a savage fight amid the ice-floes. It was a strange setting for a naval battle. Perhaps the furtive animals of the wilderness, hearing a sound roll in heavier than the roar of wind and surf, stood still in their tracks and stiffened at the thunder of that fierce fight for their pelts.

After the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, when Hudson Bay was restored to England, the Adventurers strengthened their half-dozen posts on the Bay and built the great stone fort named Prince of Wales, on the Churchill River.¹ This fort mounted forty-two cannon — six to twenty-four pounders — and was manned by some two score men. The rosters of the other forts listed from eleven to forty men apiece. And there in the bleak stillness and loneliness of the waste, year in, year out, these men lived and traded with the Indians. They drank

¹ This fort was partially destroyed in 1782 by the French Admiral La Perouse, as an ally of the Americans in the Revolutionary War. Its ruins are still standing.

snow-water for nine months of the year because the river was salt for twelve miles above its mouth; in the brief summers they hauled fresh water with three draft horses kept for the purpose. Their most pleasant duty, says one of them, was killing partridges.

But, in truth, very little is known of what happened during these years on Hudson Bay. When the last echo of Iberville's guns died away, a curtain of silence, thick and vast as the northern snows, dropped between the traders on the Bay and the bustling world. The records of the following years lie in the cellars of Hudson's Bay House in London; barely a hint of their contents has reached us. We know that yearly the ships came and went, bearing huge packs of furs home to London. We know, too, that gifts were made — silver fox tippets for Queen Anne, beaver socks for a George or two, "catt skin counterpanes" for some lordship's "bedd." Portly merchants and rich nobles, with their good dames, walked abroad in fur trimmings to stir the envious. Milord might be heard to say that he had paid a pretty penny for his beaver mittens — "egad, sir, yes, in good English money!" But little could he compute the cost of them. Behind that screen of silence was the true reckoning

made — where, at the short summer's end, the white haze gathered and lowered and moved down over land and sea, with a breath like steel, stilling the waters, burying the land, piling white towers about the trees, rearing white crags along the shore, drifting against the doors of the trading posts, shutting out the light of the windowpanes with a white tapestry, dropping, dropping. "We cannot reckon any man happy," said one, "whose lot is cast upon this Bay." These were the cost of milord's mittens — the monotonous life, the loneliness of the silent years.

Meanwhile, far to the south of Hudson Bay, the great struggle between France and England dragged on. The Americans were pushing westward to the tribes hitherto trading with the French. At length the Governor of Virginia sent the young George Washington to drive the French away from an English trading post on the Ohio, where Pittsburgh now stands, and the first shots of the Seven Years' War cracked across Great Meadows. The conquest of Canada followed; and its bloody aftermath, the Indian rising called Pontiac's War — which was the red man's protest against the new masters of the interior trading posts, the English

colonial traders — ran its course. But the fierce struggle for the hapless little beaver was only beginning.

Out of the ashes of the old French fur trade, which was under governmental ward, arose a swarm of "free traders." Among them was a woods rover of a new type. English and French pursuing the beaver we have already seen. Now in the throng of the free traders the Scot appears. We shall find him presently taking the Frenchman's place among the Indians and rising to a leadership in the fur trade which he is never to surrender. He had his difficulties at first. The Indians in the old French hinterland distinguished only between French and English; and to them the Scot was an Englishman, one of a race they had been taught by the French to hate.

One of the first, if not the first, of the free traders to enter the old French country was Alexander Henry, the elder. In 1761 Henry went from Montreal to Fort Michilimackinac. This fort was a strategic point, as it commanded the route into Lake Superior, and was the chief depot for the furs from the territory comprising Wisconsin and Michigan. Here Henry was visited by sixty Chipewas, their faces blackened with war paint, and

tomahawks and scalping knives in their hands. They consented, however, to trade with him and assured him that he might "sleep tranquilly without fear of the Chippewas." This was a sweet promise not long kept; for during Pontiac's War, two years later, the same Indians, with some Ottawas, murdered the English at Michilimackinac and took Henry prisoner. He was saved only by the friendly offices of a Chippewa who had formerly adopted him as a brother.

The "Handsome Englishman," as the Indians called Henry, seems to have been the first British trader to push beyond Michilimackinac into the Lake Superior country. By 1767 his canoes were on Lake Winnipeg. He spent sixteen years in the wilderness and penetrated at least as far north as Beaver Lake and the Churchill River. On the way to the Churchill he traveled with three other adventurers whose names are distinguished in the fur trade, the Frobishers and Peter Pond.

It was not long, indeed, before the free traders from Montreal and Quebec were overrunning the North and establishing themselves in Rupert's Land — the sacred precincts of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Frobishers built Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan and Fort Isle à la Crosse

on the lake of the same name a little north of the junction of the Beaver and Churchill rivers. Both sites, commanding the waterways to Hudson Bay, were admirably chosen. At these forts the Indians going down to the Bay were intercepted and induced — by higher prices or by rum — to sell furs that were, in some instances, already paid for by the Hudson's Bay Company in credits. Up to this time the old Company had maintained its traditional aloofness, and, except for some notable exploring expeditions, it had not stirred inland from its forts on the Bay. But in 1774, Samuel Hearne, the Company's celebrated young explorer, discoverer of the Coppermine River, came up from the big stone fort at the mouth of the Churchill and built Cumberland House, on the lake of the same name. The old Company saw at last that it would be obliged to branch inland for the protection of its trade.

The free traders hurt the Hudson's Bay Company, but they hurt themselves much more — sometimes to the extent of killing one another. And their competition and their rum were disastrous to the Indians. Traders were murdered by Indians on the march; their forts were attacked and burned, and their goods were stolen. The precarious

condition to which the free traders at length reduced themselves is reflected in an official report to the Governor of Canada on the fur trade, written in 1780. This report says that, though the furs are producing an annual return of £200,000 sterling, the gathering of them is carried on at great expense, labor, and risk of both men and property — every year furnishing instances of the loss of men and goods by accident or otherwise: that the traders in general are not men of substance but are obliged to obtain credit from the merchants of Montreal and Quebec for each year's supply of goods; and that, when their trade fails, they are destitute of every means to pay their debts.¹

It is not surprising, then, that the rival traders at both Michilimackinac and Montreal took counsel together and decided to put an end to ruinous competition. The Michilimackinac Company, formed in 1779, was an association of thirty traders called the Mackinaws. In the same year nine houses in Montreal trading west of Lake Superior joined forces; and four years later (1783) these Montreal merchants, with some others under the leadership

¹ A report to Haldimand, dated 1780, signed by nine trading houses of Montreal. Cited by Davidson, *The North West Company*, Appendix, page 256.

of the Frobishers and Simon McTavish, united in the partnership since known as the North-West Company, or the Nor'westers, the stormy petrels of the northern wilds.

The Nor'westers began in strife. Some of the "winterers" — partners who wintered in the great white land — were dissatisfied with the shares allotted them and violently withdrew. Among these was Peter Pond, explorer of the Athabaska and Great Slave regions, and too powerful a man to be left in enmity. His demands were speedily met, and he joined the Company. At this, the friends who had withdrawn with him were furiously incensed. They banded together and made war on the North-West Company's brigades. It became a war with powder and shot, for the Nor'westers stopped at nothing to smash their small rival. But when Pond killed Ross, a leader among the allied free traders, both factions took fright and united in haste to forestall any undesired investigation by the authorities. This beginning was prophetic. In the violence of their methods — and, be it said, in the brilliance of their achievements — the Nor'westers were to prove themselves deserving successors of the marauding and plundering Frenchmen on Hudson

Bay and also of the illustrious French explorers of Old Canada.

The majority of the partners were Scotch Highlanders; and it is not too much to say that they brought to their trade rivalry with the Hudson's Bay Company the spirit of Celtic chiefs at war. Their rival was a chartered company with a monopolistic grant, while they were only an association without royal favor. The Nor'westers, therefore, saw, as their first need, a loyal organization, every man of which should be bound to their interests by his own. Hence it was arranged that a clerk could become a partner after a brief term of service, the length of which depended upon his own initiative. Thus the Company attracted bold and resolute young men who were not minded to let fears or scruples shut them off from the coveted goal. The man who could produce results counted highest with the Nor'westers. Even some of the original partners contributed only their experience and energy: these were the "winterers" who commanded the trapping army in the field. The funds and the goods for trade were found by the partners resident in Montreal. But the real sinews of war were the *voyageurs* and the *cour-eurs-de-bois*, of whom the North-West Company

employed great numbers. The servants of the Hudson's Bay Company were chiefly English and Scotch, who had first to learn the ways of the wild and so were no match for the Canadian boatmen and trappers, the product of several generations of wilderness life.

The Nor'westers made their interior headquarters on the north shore of Lake Superior, first at Grand Portage (Minnesota) at the mouth of the Pigeon River, and later at Fort William (Ontario) at the mouth of the Kaministiquia. These posts were outside the royal domain of the Hudson's Bay Company, but not far; only a day's journey over the watershed separated them from the Rainy Lake region drained by Hudson Bay and therefore Rupert's Land or Hudson's Bay Territory. From Grand Portage the Nor'westers' brigades ranged westward through Rupert's Land and far north to the Athabaska and Great Slave Lakes. They also tapped the territory south of Lake Superior and southwest as far as the Mandan towns on the Missouri. Nor did they wholly respect the regions to the southwest sacred to the Mackinaws, with whose men they frequently clashed.

To the *voyageur* of the Nor'westers' brigades there was only one person more ridiculous than a

Mackinaw *voyageur*, and that was a Hudson's Bay man. The Mackinaw *voyageur* might be a great man in his own opinion; but let him walk humbly when men of the Nor'westers hove to at Michilimackinac for extra canoes on their way to *le pays d'En Haut*! "*Je suis un homme du Nord!*" the Nor'wester would brag as he jostled aside the despised Mackinaw. Anything to provoke a fight! Like master, like man! Such discourtesies well reflected the views of the partners themselves towards their rivals in trade. The Nor'westers held in contempt the Hudson's Bay Company, with its slow ways and its code of lawful dealing. Its pious principles — one price, no violence, and no rum for Indians — the Nor'westers regarded with unutterable scorn.

But let us see what these Nor'westers did to roll back the mystery of unknown lands. Far to the northwest, a thousand miles from Lake Superior, stood their Fort Chipewyan, on the south side of Lake Athabaska. There lived Alexander Mackenzie, a young Scot in his thirties, who had begun his career as a clerk in a free trading establishment and because of his abilities had been granted a partnership in the North-West Company. Mackenzie proposed to make Fort Chipewyan not merely an

outpost of his Company's trade but the emporium of the greatest trapper's country on the continent. He saw the commanding position of his fort on Lake Athabaska as the central depot for a vast traffic. Great water highways led to it from every direction. On the south and west the inflowing streams of the Athabaska and the Peace linked him on the one hand to the Saskatchewan Valley and on the other to the Rocky Mountains. To the east lay a chain of lakes and streams stretching towards the rivers entering Hudson Bay. And to the north a tremendous river, issuing from Lake Athabaska, gathered up its mighty waters in the Great Slave Lake and moved on through the northern forests.

This river was unknown. Beyond the Great Slave Lake no white man had followed its course to the Frozen Sea. Nor had any white man yet penetrated the Rocky Mountains and reached the Pacific by land. Both these achievements fell to the glory of Alexander Mackenzie. In the summer of 1789 he discovered and explored to the Arctic the great river now known as the Mackenzie. And three years later, he passed up the Peace River, crossed the Rockies, and, on July 22, 1793, painted his name in red letters on a rock beside the Pacific Ocean.

Mackenzie's Odyssey was soon the gossip and song of the whole North. In Rupert's Land, building forts for the Hudson's Bay Company, was a young surveyor named David Thompson, who was greatly disturbed by it and discontented. He, too, wished to cross the mountains and explore. His ambition was to survey and map the whole of the great Northwest, to pierce the mystery of the wilderness with the clear light of science. But Thompson's pleas to the Company fell on deaf ears. He was too good a trader and altogether too valuable a man to send awandering. The North-West Company, however, would give him his opportunity if the Hudson's Bay Company would not. So it came about that Thompson, on May 23, 1797, being then at Deer Lake, wrote in his journal: "This Day I left the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and entered that of the Company of the Merchants from Canada. May God Almighty prosper me."

Thompson received his instructions at Grand Portage in June, the month after he entered the Company's service. He was to survey and map the fur country, showing the geographical position of the forts, and to find the forty-ninth parallel, which was to mark the boundary between the

American and British Northwests. He was to go south to the Missouri and explore the sites of ancient villages, hunt for fossils, and learn what he could of the ancient history of the country. For the rest he could follow his heart's desire; and his progress would be facilitated by orders on the trading posts for whatever he needed in men and goods. His was the biggest dream of all. Other men sought one river; but to Thompson the River of the West was only as a single brook on the great map he meant to make of the whole Northwest.

Thompson set out from Grand Portage, to be on trail almost continuously for nine years. In that time he ranged from Great Slave Lake to the Missouri, traced the headwaters of the Mississippi, entered the Rocky Mountains from the head of the Saskatchewan, made numbers of geographical sketches and scientific notes on the country from the Rockies to Hudson Bay and the Great Lakes, and surveyed the shores of Lake Superior.¹ His labors were by no means ended. In 1807 he

¹ "Thompson was an exceedingly accurate and methodical surveyor," says Mr. J. B. Tyrrell of the Geological Survey of Canada, the editor of Thompson's *Narrative*; "it was my good fortune to travel over the same routes that he had travelled a century before, and while my instruments may have been better than his, his surveys and observations were invariably found to have an accuracy that left little or nothing to be desired."

crossed the Rockies. He spent four years on the Columbia and its tributaries, building forts and trading with new tribes; returning to the Nor'-westers' forts east of the mountains from time to time with large packs of furs. He was thus the first man to make a detailed survey of those parts of Idaho, Montana, Washington, and British Columbia which are watered by the Columbia or by its source and branch streams.

A rare man was David Thompson — a little man, but every inch of him an inch of power. Except for his short stature he might readily have passed for an Indian with his jet black hair cut straight across his forehead, fringing his brows, with his black eyes, and his tanned cheeks painted with Nature's vermilion. An associate has left this description of him: "Never mind his Bunyan-like face and cropped hair: he has a very powerful mind and a singular faculty of picture-making. He can create a wilderness and people it with warring savages, or climb the Rocky Mountains with you in a snow storm, so clearly and palpably, that only shut your eyes and you hear the crack of the rifle, or feel the snow flakes melt on your cheeks as he talks."¹ In fort or on trail

¹ Bigsby, *The Shoe and Canoe*.

Thompson ruled his men like a benevolent master; and he was a law to himself, whatever the orders of his Company. He would have no liquor with his brigades; he would not use it in trade. Once two of the partners, Donald McTavish and John McDonald of Garth — whom we shall meet later — compelled him to take some kegs of whiskey for trade with the tribes in the mountains. Thompson selected a vicious, unbroken horse to pack the kegs and then let it go through the defiles at its own gait. The horse was in perfect sympathy with Thompson's ideas — only splinters of the kegs remained when the brigade reached the trading post — and Thompson reported that he felt sure the same costly accident would occur if another unwise attempt were made to transport liquor across the mountains.

Devoutly religious, Thompson sought the spiritual welfare of the *voyageurs* and *coureurs-de-bois* who traveled with him. He preached the moral life, a manhood sprung from the Godhead and confident in its source, brotherly and equitable, finding its joys not in excesses of the senses but in self-mastery. Seldom passed an evening in camp that Thompson did not read aloud three chapters from the Old Testament and three chapters from

the New, and then expound their meaning in "most extraordinarily pronounced French." By the rushing Saskatchewan, among the snow wastes of Athabaska, on the bleak crags of the Rocky Mountains, this prophet in buckskin, like Isaiah of old, called to a primitive people, "Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."

While Thompson was searching for the source of the Columbia, another Nor'wester, Simon Fraser, also exploring beyond the mountains, far north of the Columbia, discovered the Fraser River and followed it down to the widening of its mouth near the sea.

The journals of Fraser, Mackenzie, Thompson, and the elder Henry, like those of Lewis and Clark, are records of heroism as well as of discovery; and they are the earliest epics of the Great West. The ideal of sheer manhood pitted against vast and primal Nature, which is the underlying theme of these journals, still animates the literature of the West; but it is doubtful if any of the later writings present that ideal more faithfully than do the journals of these old explorers. Unconsciously, out of his deep sincerity, Thompson makes himself known to us as the Star-Man, the name given him by some of the tribes, by day and night on the

plains and the mountains, taking observations with his primitive instruments, so that by the fixed law of the heavens he might at last bring the whole of that vast unknown land into the clear apprehension and, so, into the service of mankind. No finer touch of art than his is needed to picture for us this trader-astronomer and his small band of half a dozen men, almost out of food, pressing slowly and painfully through the dense snows of Athabaska Pass — where the dogs seemed to “swim in the road beat by the snowshoes,” and, so high lay their route, that the stars looked to be within hands’ reach — while somewhere behind them, as they knew, in close pursuit followed a warrior band of the fierce Piegans. Nor could literary imagination conceive of a more dramatic escape than the one he narrates without comment. The Indians came upon his trail in the mountains, and, perceiving the helpless situation of their quarry, knowing they had but to advance and kill, were stopped by the sight of three huge bears which emerged from the rocks and stood across the Star-Man’s tracks. There the Piegans turned back, understanding that the Great Spirit had sent the bears to protect his son, for, as they said, “we all believe the Great Spirit speaks to you in the night when you are

looking at the Moon and Stars and tells you of what we know nothing." One line from Thompson's pen lays bare the explorer's heart, when, following the mystifying bends and doublings of the upper Columbia, he cried out: "God give me to see where its waters flow into the ocean!"

There was another side to the life of the Nor'-westers. Whatever their lot, whether in fort or afield or in the countinghouse district of Montreal, they took life gaily. Their Beaver Club, on Beaver Hall Hill in Montreal, was a famous place. It was an exclusive club. No partner was eligible for membership in it unless he had spent at least one winter in the North. Men who had gone hardily through the rough life of a winter in *le pays d'En Haut* could be relied upon to keep the Beaver Club from stagnating, at any rate, and a right rollicking place they made of it, from all accounts, as they met o' nights to eat and drink, to toast the King and each other and all the lads of the North conglomerately and severally.

Spring was above all others the season of unbounded joy, for in spring the brigades came in with their furs. Then it was that hilarity broke away from the confining walls of the Beaver Club and resounded through the streets and taverns of

Montreal and along the bank of the St. Lawrence. On these nights, as April glided into May, fiddles screeched and *voyageurs* and trappers jigged and sang by the gleaming camp fires beside the river, while some of their comrades sprawled on the ground whiffing the beloved "tabac"; and betimes Indian drums sounded under the scream of the fiddles — like the undertone of booming surf in a shrill wind — to the padding of the feet of Indian trappers in the wild buffalo and wolf dances.

No less boisterous would be the scene in the candle-lighted banquet room of the Beaver Club, where sat lusty Scots wearing gold-braided uniforms, eating and drinking from silver salvers and goblets, all engraved with the Club's crest — a beaver — and the motto, *Fortitude in Distress*. While from the river's bank rose the strains of the *voyageur's* song —

*"Lui-ya longtemps que je t'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai —"*

or the roar and bellow of the buffalo cry from the trampling Indian dancers whirling with their pine-knot torches, the revelers in the Beaver Club poured still another libation to the lads of the North. A McTavish or a McKay danced the

Highland sword-dance, to the plaudits and quaffings about the board. Fortitude in Distress! On two thousand miles of peril they had proved again that the brigades of the Nor'westers were manned by the swiftest, the hardiest, and the boldest men who roamed the wilds. At length came the concluding ceremony, a tribute to the *voyageur*. The lordly Nor'westers and their guests knelt on the floor and, with tongs, pokers, canes, or whatever would serve their purpose, imitated the canoeman's swift, rhythmic strokes, while they sang in rousing chorus one of his favorite paddle-songs.

When by river, lake, and portage the canoe brigades arrived early in summer at Fort William¹ on Lake Superior, even wilder scenes were enacted. The Nor'westers did not own Montreal; but Fort William was theirs, and at Fort William they made such laws and social conventions as pleased them. The fort held a huge banquet hall where two hundred men could feast at their ease. Portraits of the King and of Nelson adorned the rough walls. But the picture most contemplated, no doubt, was the large map of the fur country drawn by David

¹ Built by the Nor'westers in 1803, on British soil, forty miles north of Grand Portage, their former Lake Superior headquarters, after some unwelcome visits from American customs officers.

Thompson. The fare on the rude tables was not inferior to that prepared in the Beaver Club, for the best French chefs, at lordly hire, had been cajoled to endanger their art and their lives on rapids and whirlpools in order to cook venison steaks and buffalo tongues to a king's taste in Fort William. To a Nor'wester's nice palate there was, it seems, nothing incongruous in a buffalo's tongue served up in one of those seductive sauces with which a Pompadour or a Montespan had once essayed to recapture the butterfly heart of her monarch. The finest of wines had also been carried over the long route to give tang to the welcome home. And, when the last drop was drained, the casks were rolled out on the floor and such Nor'westers as could still keep semblance of a balance would sit astride of them shouting and singing. Among the feasters were traders from the Far North — some of whom wintered on the Mackenzie River. Fort William was all that these outlanders ever saw of civilization. Here for a short time once a year they spoke with white men, ate and drank and clasped hands with their kind.

One of the events of this yearly gathering was the buffalo hunt. It was not only for pemmican and dried meat that the trapper hunted the buffalo.

He needed the skins for clothing and for bedding, for the making of his tent and bull-boat and saddle. The bone was put to various uses, supplementing the trapper's steel weapons; and the sinew sometimes served as thread or cord.

The trappers mounted and rode westward to their favorite hunting grounds in the country of the Mandans. Between the Saskatchewan and the Missouri lay one of the greatest buffalo ranges, where these animals roamed in such numbers that often a single herd was known to take several days to pass a given point; and the plains were plowed deep with their trails leading to and from their drinking-places. Sometimes the white trappers followed the favorite hunting methods of the Indian members of their fraternity, which were either to drive the buffalo over a cliff, for hunters stationed below to make an end of by rifle or bow and arrow, or to decoy them into a corral. This latter was accomplished by an Indian in a buffalo robe, skilled in the native art of mimicry. As a rule, however, the trappers preferred a fair field and no favor. They rode down on the herd, singled out their quarry, and fired the first shots that started the stampede. Then not only the hunter's skillful riding and his accuracy of aim but the intelligence

and speed of his horse were required to keep the battle an even one. For a stumble, a misstep, an instant's slowness in wheeling and dodging, meant death to the hunter and his mount.

After the hunt and, of course, the feast which celebrated it the trappers prepared the meat and skins for winter use. All must now be made ready for the time when they should set forth to trap. Weapons were overhauled by the smith. The trapper's garments were cut and fashioned — by his Indian wife, probably, for the gates of the fort were wide open to the tawny belles of the plains. Nothing too simple in style was considered good sartorial art. The trapper must have his moccasins plentifully beaded or worked with brightly dyed quills, and his leggings and jacket must be fringed. He was forced to go without the little bells or jingling bits of metal in which the canoe-man rejoiced, for his task of stalking wild animals necessitated a silent wardrobe. But he could have a bright sash, wonderful gauntlets, a beaded cap, as well as a fur one for cold weather, fur pouches for powder and shot, and perhaps a beaded bear's or swan's foot pouch for his tobacco. With these added to his hunting suit, the trapper considered himself appropriately tailored. Sometimes a cap

mounted with horns or furry ears was included in the trousseau in which he was to wed the white Solitude. This was an Indian hunter's device for deceiving wild animals where the man must cross open snowy spaces to get within range. Other methods also the trapper practised to conceal his presence from the creatures of the wilderness. When he set his traps, he trailed the hide of a freshly killed deer over his tracks to obscure the man-smell; and if he had handled his traps without deer hide on his hands, he smeared them with an oily substance extracted from the beaver, which served also as a bait.

It might be that the gaily fringed and handsomely accoutered trapper, who set out with buoyant heart as the snows fell, would return with wealth in his pack. It might be that he would never return. The bait in his traps would lure other beasts than the beaver or fox or mink he invited; and, to the wolf-pack, the man-smell caused no fear.

While the Nor'westers were thus spreading the trapper's kingdom towards the northern and western oceans, the traders of St. Louis were not letting the time pass unimproved. Lewis and Clark had opened the way for them to expand their trade.

Not idly or casually had Jefferson instructed Lewis to form trading relations with the Indians along the Missouri. In the year after the return of the great expedition, Manuel Lisa, a Spanish trader, formed a partnership with Drouillard, who had been with Lewis and Clark, and ascended the Missouri to the Yellowstone. On the way he met the lone explorer and trapper, John Colter, and easily persuaded him to turn back. Up the Yellowstone they went, into the country of the warlike and pilfering Crows, to the mouth of the Big Horn. Here Lisa built a fort and opened trade. In the following year (1808) the Missouri Fur Company was organized with William Clark and Lisa as two of the partners; and in another two years the company had built trading posts in the Mandan towns and at Three Forks.

Not unhampered did the Missouri Fur Company's brigades, led by Lisa and Drouillard, pass upon the river highway; and it was believed by them and their friends that the Indians who fired volleys at their pirogues were set upon them by the Nor'westers to discourage the invasion of what those autocratic fur barons considered to be their territory. Drouillard, who was in charge of the post at Three Forks, was waylaid and killed by

Blackfeet while he was out hunting in the Jefferson Valley, in the year that the fort was built. Colter was captured by Indians of the same tribe. His courageous demeanor so impressed the Blackfeet that they gave the white man a chance for his life. Colter was stripped even to his moccasins, led out a hundred yards or so on to the plain and told to run. His run for life by which he miraculously escaped should long ago have inspired some maker of ballads. After a race of six miles over the plain, which was covered with prickly pear, he cast the Indians off his trail by diving under a raft in the river where he hid until the Blackfeet gave up the search. Then he swam downstream, landed, and traveled for seven days, naked, without weapons, his feet full of thorns, until he reached Lisa's fort on the Yellowstone.

The next notable figure on the fur-trading field was John Jacob Astor of New York. Astor was planning a vast scheme which involved the establishment of trading posts on the Columbia, a chain of posts across the plains—in fact, the control of the entire fur trade of the continent. He was acquainted with the Nor'westers, having bought furs from them for some years for his New York trade, and was anxious for them to join him in his enterprise on the Columbia if the matter could be

arranged. As a preliminary step, he proposed that he and they should buy out the Mackinaws and thus remove a rival from the trade about the Lakes. It suited the Nor'westers to help Astor obliterate the Mackinaws, which was finally done, but further than that his plans for mastery of the fur trade met with no sympathy from them. In particular they disliked his views with regard to posts on the Pacific Coast, for they were themselves about to petition the British Government for a charter for a monopoly of the trade west and immediately east¹ of the Rockies; and it had been with this purpose in mind that they had sent Thompson and Fraser on their journeys of exploration. Now appeared this cloud, Astor the American, on their bright horizon. The leading partners had a conference with Thompson²; and although there seems

¹ Territory drained by the Athabaska and Mackenzie rivers and therefore not within the chartered domain of the Hudson's Bay Company.

² On June 28, 1810, Alexander Henry, the younger, at the North-West Company's southernmost post on the Athabaska wrote in his journal, "Mr. Thompson embarked with his family for Montreal in a light canoe with five men." Since Thompson was traveling light, the inference is that he was speeding to Montreal in response to orders just received by the brigade returning from that point, though he may have received his final instructions at Fort William on the way East and have gone no further. His journals are silent on this point.

to be no record of it, there is little doubt that he was bidden to build a post on the upper Columbia and to lay claim to the territory about its headwaters and the Snake, and thence to complete his exploration of the Columbia to its mouth. If his orders had been to beat Astor's ship, the *Tonquin*, in a race to the mouth of the river — as has often been stated — he would not have spent the spring of 1811 on its upper waters. It was not by preceding Astor's men on the coast but by the charter they hoped to receive as a result of their explorations that the Nor'westers expected to gain Oregon, for as a chartered company they would be backed by the British Government.

Whether John Jacob Astor knew the plans of the Nor'westers, even as they knew his, is conjectural. However that may be, he proceeded with his own enterprise. His first contingent would sail in the ship *Tonquin* from New York and take the sea route round Cape Horn — the route which Robert Gray had sailed twenty years before — to the entrance of the River of the West. And a fleet of pirogues, conveying men in his service, would strike from St. Louis up the Missouri to follow the trail of Lewis and Clark into Oregon.

CHAPTER IV

THE TONQUIN

IF in these dawning hours of the Great West the trapper was lord of the land, the ruler of the waters along the Northwest Coast was the Indian hunter of sea-otter — a dark-skinned Neptune with spear for trident. The sea-otter trade, initiated by the Russians and advertised by Cook, had grown largely since the adventures of John Meares and Robert Gray. And it was almost wholly an American trade. By 1801 fifteen American vessels, nearly all from Boston, were trading with the natives on the Pacific; and in that year fourteen thousand pelts were shipped and sold in China at an average of thirty dollars apiece.

So it was that in the year 1810 John Jacob Astor of New York was preparing to capture the trade of the Northwest Coast, and the Nor'westers in Montreal were conferring with David Thompson to defeat him. That Astor had in mind the sea-otter

trade when he decided to send a ship round the Horn, as well as an expedition overland, is not to be doubted. He would place the *Tonquin* in the sea-otter trade on the Coast and build posts for the land trade in beaver on the Columbia and at suitable points across the continent. Thus he would control a mighty fur-trading system reaching from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean and on to China and India. It was a bold plan worthy of the genius and imagination of this pioneer of American commerce.

Meanwhile a similar idea had entered the Russian mind. In 1806 the Inspector at New Archangel, Alaska, had urged his Government to found a settlement at the mouth of the Columbia and to build a battleship for the purpose of driving the American traders away. His enterprising suggestion went further. He pointed out that, from the settlement on the Columbia, the Russians could advance southward to San Francisco and "in the course of ten years we should become strong enough to make use of any favorable turn in European politics to include the coast of California in the Russian possession." That the Russians planned to descend upon the Columbia in 1810, a Boston trader named Winship learned from his brother,

also a trading captain; and he made haste to forestall them. Early in the spring, Winship ran his vessel up the Columbia, sowed grain, and began building on a low spit which he named Oak Point. Indian hostility compelled him to abandon the undertaking, and he departed with the intent to return next year in force sufficient to cope with the savages. Winship's attempt at occupancy amounted to nothing in itself, but his presence on the river that year caused a postponement of the Russians' secret design. But for this Boston seaman the story of Old Oregon might not now find place in the history of the United States. Two years later, in 1812, came just such a "favorable turn" as the forward-looking Inspector at New Archangel had been on the lookout for. While England was warring with Napoleon and Madison, and while Americans were intent on the conquest of Canada, an expansive Russia soundly established on the River of the West, with armored brigs to chase away American traders, might well have laid a locking grasp upon the coast from Alaska to California. Indeed, the War of 1812 had hardly more than begun when Russian traders stole down to Bodega, California, and, with the permission of the Spanish authorities, erected a trading post.

This trading post they subsequently transformed into a fort from which they refused to budge despite the indignant cries raised by Spain.

The belief prevailed among American traders that alien influences were at work among the savages. In 1803 occurred the seizure of the *Boston* and the massacre of the crew at Nootka by Maquinna's tribe. And in 1805 the savages attacked another Boston ship trading in Millbank Sound and murdered the captain and a number of the crew. Russian vessels were at this time cruising southward and were in the habit of calling at Nootka and at the mouth of the Columbia. No proof was advanced, however, of Russian complicity in these attacks.

It was plain that the time had come for a fort to be erected at the mouth of the Columbia — the time for occupation to attest ownership. On that subject, as we have seen, the Russians, the Canadian Nor'westers, and the American Astor were all agreed. The question was, *which of the three should build the fort?*

Of John Jacob Astor's early life not a great deal is known. He was born of poor parents in 1763 at Waldorf, a village near Heidelberg in Germany.

At sixteen he worked in a butcher's shop belonging to his father. Then he ran off to London. There, four years later, he learned that a brother had gone to America; and this news, coupled with his vision of money to be made in America, prompted him to try his fortune in the New World. It would seem that his thrift and his business acumen had already achieved results, for the young man who had arrived in London a penniless lad left for America on a ship sailing for Baltimore with a small collection of goods for trade. He reached New York some time in 1784. Here, following the advice of a furrier he had met in Baltimore, he exchanged his merchandise for furs and returned in the same year to London, where he disposed of his peltry at a good profit. He had found the right road to fortune. Ten years later he had established a profitable business and was purchasing furs in large quantities from the North-West Company of Montreal for shipment to Europe and China.

In 1808 Astor incorporated by charter from the State of New York the American Fur Company, with a capital of one million dollars supplied by himself. Soon afterwards he combined with the Nor'westers, as we have seen, to buy out the Mackinaws, whose American trade was turned over

to him with the proviso that he should not trade in Great Britain or her colonies. Astor's magnificent plan was taking shape. His acquisition of the trading posts of the Mackinaws in Wisconsin was the first link forged in the great chain which he intended to stretch across the continent and which should bind under his control the whole fur trade of the United States. However little he knew of the Nor'westers' ulterior plans, he saw that they were spreading overland towards the Pacific; and, wishing to eliminate them as rivals, he proposed that they should join with him in the Columbia trade and offered them an interest of one-third. He was also planning to conciliate the Russians and to gain control of the Pacific coast trade to China. Probably he saw, in his invitation to the Nor'westers, the first step towards control of their Canadian and British trade, also, and so, towards ultimate mastery of the whole traffic of North America in pelts. And probably the Nor'westers saw what Astor saw, namely, the final elimination of themselves, even as by a coalition they had helped him to eliminate the Mackinaws, for they refused his offer and made swift plans for a descent upon the Columbia.

Astor took up the gage of battle and went on

with the organization of his Pacific Fur Company for trade on the Pacific Coast. He believed that he would conquer his rivals and finally drive them from the new field beyond the Rocky Mountains. The Nor'westers had no sea-going ships. Their furs must reach Montreal from the West through Fort William by a long and perilous inland route; therefore, the farther westward they pushed their activities, the greater became their difficulties and their expenses in bringing their furs to market. On the other hand, Astor would have not only his cross-country chain of forts from St. Louis on the south and the Great Lakes on the north to the Columbia, but his sea-going *Tonquin* and in time other vessels as required. By sea, he would ship supplies to the forts on the Columbia, and from headquarters at the mouth of that river he would ship the furs to Canton, while his trading posts to be built along the Missouri would be supplied by pirogues from St. Louis and would, in turn, send their furs by the same means to that city.

Astor knew what was the chief factor in the spectacular rise of the North-West Company — its men. And he realized that, if his superior advantages in other respects were to count at their full value in the battle before him, he too

must have men of the same stamina and experience. Where should he look for them? In the North-West Company itself, of course, for the Nor'westers had no peers. He therefore opened the war by detaching from the Nor'westers several of their "winterers" and clerks. He enticed to join him, among others, Alexander Mackay, the great Mackenzie's companion in exploration, David Stuart of Labrador, and his nephew Robert Stuart, Duncan McDougal, and some clerks from Montreal, including Ross and Franchère, the authors of the diaries which are our chief sources of information concerning the enterprise. But Astor needed more than partners and clerks: he needed also some of those French-Canadian *voyageurs* who served with paddle and pole in the Nor'westers' canoe brigades between Montreal and Fort William. He enlisted into his service a number of these, and they came in a body with their canoes down the Hudson to New York.

Having recruited his men, Astor proceeded to carry out the first part of his plan, which involved making ready for sea his ship, the *Tonquin*, and sending it round the Horn to the Columbia, with several of his new partners and servants aboard. On the Columbia they would choose a suitable

site and erect a fort, which McDougal would command, while the *Tonquin* under Captain Thorn would ply along the coast for trade.

The *Tonquin* was a vessel of some 290 tons, mounting ten guns and carrying a crew of about twenty-one men. Her captain, Jonathan Thorn, was a naval officer on leave of absence. He was a man of rigid determination, a believer in iron discipline, and easily moved to wrath by the smallest infringement of the hide-bound rules and proprieties of his code; a faithful, loyal man, but without the least understanding of human nature, and too lacking in imagination to have any sympathy or good feeling towards persons who were different from himself and whose characters, therefore, could not commend themselves to him. Thorn took his responsibility towards Astor very seriously. Doubtless he was prepared to die bravely and, if need be, go down with his ship in his employer's interest and for the honor of his flag. But what his employer's interests required of the skipper of the *Tonquin* was most of all humor and tact in dealing with the passengers. And neither humor nor tact was at all mentioned in any seaman's manual ever perused by Captain Jonathan Thorn.

He took one look at the "winterers" and their

voyageurs and despised them on sight for a shabby, roistering set of braggarts. He saw the partners sitting among the canoemen — no naval commander ever sat thus with deck-swabbers! — smoking with them, passing the pipe from mouth to mouth in Indian fashion (a custom which affronted his sanitary soul) and roaring with them in chorus the innumerable verses of *À la claire fontaine*, or *Malbrouck*. And he immediately wrote to Astor, in effect urging him to get rid of these noisy, useless knaves, who would do his project no good, besides being an offense to the eyes of a tidy man. When, at the first roll of the sea, partners, clerks, and *voyageurs* were overcome by seasickness, Thorn knew for certain that not one of them had ever done a man's job in his life. They were falsifiers and fabricators. They had never seen the fur country where they claimed to have experienced wild adventures; they had gone no farther into the wilderness than the waterfront of Montreal; they were waiters, barbers, draymen, and scallywags. He doubted much if any one of the *voyageurs* had ever dipped a paddle. In Thorn's experience, men who were accustomed to water did not get seasick. Yes, he had them there; it took a sailor to find these rogues out.

And what was the opinion of Thorn current among the ex-Nor'westers and their crew of paddlemen? We may readily imagine how the stiff and truculent naval dictator, with his set of rules, appeared to "Labrador" Stuart and to Mackay of Athabasca — Mackay, who had made those miraculous journeys with Mackenzie — men whose swift initiative had, time and time again, saved themselves and their comrades from sudden peril in the wilds. The *voyageurs* probably wondered by what right Thorn gave himself such airs, since all he had to do was to stand on the deck of a large stoutly made boat while the winds took it over the waves of broad open water without an obstruction. Put him in a frail bark canoe and let him run the boiling rapids, with great rocks, gnashing like the teeth of a devouring monster, to grind him to splinters. Would he, by a deft paddle-stroke, or a thrust of the pole, whirl his craft aside and send it flying past those jaws, like a feather on the spume? "*Crayez! Moi, j'n'l' crais pas!*"

Into this mutual non-admiration society Astor sent farewell letters filled with wise advice. The partners were assured that Captain Thorn was a strict disciplinarian, a severe man, whose favor they should cultivate by very circumspect behavior; and

Thorn was advised to prevent misunderstandings and to inspire the passengers with a spirit of good humor at all times. Here then was a setting and a cast prepared for either an excellent comedy or a bitter tragedy, according as circumstances should direct.

On September 8, 1810, the *Tonquin* was on her way out of the harbor of New York. That she was convoyed by the *Constitution* brings to mind certain facts and assumptions which have an oblique bearing on the subsequent history of Astor's enterprise. While the American Government did not take any part in Astor's venture, its attitude was sympathetic. It may be said that he had the Government's moral support in his large schemes for cornering the fur trade. And he had been readily granted an armed convoy to guard the *Tonquin* beyond the point where, it was rumored, a British man-of-war waited its chance to stop Astor's vessel and impress the Canadians aboard of her. The presence of the British vessel was supposed to be due to the machinations of the North-West Company. But that supposition hardly shows agreement in motive with another assumption, namely, that some of the ex-Nor'westers on board the *Tonquin*, McDougal in particular, were

still more loyal to their old company than to Astor. To be impressed into the British Navy would have prevented the opportunity they might have later to play the game on the coast in the interests of their Montreal friends. Some of them had already related Astor's plans to the British consul in New York; and all of them had deceived Astor in the matter of the American naturalization on which he had insisted. The British man-of-war is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that England, in the midst of the colossal struggle with Napoleon, needed seamen and was not over particular how she got them.

All lights out and under convoy, the *Tonquin* slipped by safely and headed south.

The salt air gave the passengers lively appetites. They demanded food at all hours and cursed the sea-biscuit that mocked palates yearning for venison steaks. Thorn's disgust increased daily. He viewed with contempt the various clerks who sat on deck scribbling down in their journals everything new to them that passed upon wave or sky. Did the ship sail by an island that looked inviting? At once there was a clamor to land and explore. There was almost a riot on board because Thorn refused to let his passengers off on the coast of

Patagonia where, so they had heard, the natives were of huge size and strangely made.

Occasionally it was necessary to make port because the supply of fresh water was low. The passengers would seize these opportunities to make explorations and to hunt penguins, sea-lions, or whatever game the coast afforded. And, paying no attention to the ship's signals to them to return, they would continue their amusement until it palled. The second or third time that delay occurred on their account — the ship was then at the Falkland Islands, in December — Thorn in a rage put to sea without them. Fortunately for the excursionists, the younger Stuart had remained on board. When Thorn refused to heave to and wait for the eight men who were desperately tugging after the *Tonquin* in the ship's boat, young Stuart drew his pistol and threatened to shoot the captain through the head unless he shortened sail and let the boat come up. A shift of the wind rather than Stuart's pistol slowed the *Tonquin's* pace and the indignant sightseers were presently safe on board. In Thorn's account of the matter to his employer, he deplores the shift of wind and asserts that it would have been to Astor's advantage if the men had been left behind. It is probable that this

incident did little to improve the relations between the captain and the partners, for discord continued uninterruptedly throughout the voyage, waxing fierce off Robinson Crusoe's island in the Pacific, where the passengers wished to collect souvenirs.

On the 25th of December the *Tonquin* rounded Cape Horn and on the 12th of February put in at Hawaii and anchored in the bay of Karakakooa. Astor had given instructions as to the treatment of the natives of Hawaii, because he intended to establish trade with them. The ex-Nor'westers were thoroughly at home when it came to making the right impression on the Hawaiians. They had had experience in making friends with savages and knew that visits and councils and gifts, without haste, were the proper means. Thorn was interested only in securing a supply of hogs and fresh water for the ship, and he saw nothing but childish dilly-dallying in the conduct of his passengers with the natives. "Frantic gambols," Thorn called the whole procedure.

The partners had distributed firearms to their men, while at Hawaii, so that no possible act of treachery on the part of the natives should catch them unprotected. But Thorn suspected them of plotting to seize the ship. He had visions of a

bloody mutiny in which he would be deposed, perhaps murdered, and Astor's enterprise would be ruined. He must have made his suspicion known, for the partners were soon playing upon it. They would make furtive signs, cease speaking English and converse in Gaelic, whenever Thorn came by. He wrote to Astor warning him about these "mysterious and unwarranted" conversations.

On March 22, 1811, the *Tonquin* stood off Cape Disappointment.

There was a high wind and a rough sea. On the hidden sand bars stretching almost across the entrance to the bay, the surf pounded and roared and leaped like Niagara. The ship hove to about three leagues from shore; and the Captain ordered Fox, the mate, with another sailor and three *voyageurs*, to take out the whaleboat and seek the channel. Fox begged for seamen to man the boat; but Thorn insisted that they could not be spared from their tasks on the ship. In desperation Fox appealed to the partners. They, in turn, argued with Thorn. The dangers were apparent. The whaleboat was a small ramshackle affair not fit to dare such a sea as now raced over the bar; the *voyageurs* were skilled in their special work as canoemen, but they had no knowledge of the sea. Fox was

unfortunate in his emissaries. They merely stiffened the Captain's back. To Thorn, these were the men who had held his ship up while they hunted penguins, who had baited him in Gaelic and mocked his dignity with too much singing. Now they were trying to interfere with his management of his ship, were they?

At one o'clock in the afternoon the whaleboat left the ship. Those on deck watched it until it was hidden by the cataracts of surf. All the afternoon they waited for the boat's return with news of the channel. They waited through the night. Morning broke. The wind had slackened; the sea was calmer. The *Tonquin* sailed in nearer to shore. All that day the watchers on deck looked out hoping to descry the whaleboat emerging through the high roaring surf between the capes; and all day they saw nothing but the white hounds of the sea rushing at full cry across the bar. Darkness fell, and the ship moved out to safer water.

Next morning the *Tonquin* cast anchor near to the Cape. The pinnace was manned and lowered — Thorn could spare seamen today — and "Labrador" Stuart and Alexander Mackay went with the crew. The surf forced a retreat and Stuart and Mackay returned to the ship. Then Thorn headed

the *Tonquin* towards the entrance, but he dared not attempt to find the channel through the piling breakers. Once again the pinnacle was lowered, again to be driven back. Thorn sent it out a third time with orders to sound ahead while the ship followed. Aiken, the seaman in charge of the pinnacle, having found the channel, attempted to return to the ship at a signal from Thorn. The boat was near enough to the *Tonquin* for those on board to hear the cries for help that rose as the waves suddenly swirled the little craft about and swept it away towards the bar. Dusk was falling, and presently the pinnacle was lost to view. The *Tonquin*, still heading in, was in a perilous way. She was striking frequently in the narrow channel and the breakers washed over her. At length the tide rose and the flow carried her in beyond the cape. She dropped anchor in the bay.

In the morning, search parties were sent out along the beach. Presently the party headed by Thorn came upon Weekes, one of the men who had been in the pinnacle. His boat had been swamped. He and a Sandwich Islander, one of the crew, had reached land. Another Sandwich Islander's body was washed ashore during the day. No trace was to be found of the other white men who had been

in the pinnace, nor of the whaleboat and its crew.

The *Tonquin* had first anchored off Cape Disappointment on the 22d of March. Three days and nights had passed before those now aboard of her had looked over the safe waters of Baker's Bay behind the promontory. And eight men had perished.

There were clerks on board the *Tonquin* and they set down in their diaries, in detail, every incident of those seventy-two hours of terror. They wrote of the aspect of the coast, of the sound and fearful appearance of the breakers running mountain high, of the sunken bars that wreck ships. And after them came Washington Irving, man of letters. Irving read their journals and talked with other sailors who had adventured through the perils of that place; and he pictured faithfully, albeit discursively in the literary fashion of his day, the danger and the terror which Nature had set to guard the entrance to the River of the West. But our minds go back to the log-book of the discoverer of that river. And we begin to see the nature of the feat Robert Gray was recording when he jotted down those few terse sentences:

Being within six miles of the land, saw an entrance in the same. . . . At half past three bore away and

ran in northeast by east, having from four to eight fathoms, sandy bottom; and, as we drew in nearer between the bars, had from ten to thirteen fathoms, having a very strong tide of ebb to stem. . . . At five P.M. came to . . . in a safe harbor.

No; Robert Gray was not a writer. But he appears to have been a seaman.

Now began a series of squabbles between Thorn and the partners concerning a site for the fort. Thorn was for rigging up a shelter on the bay shore. There he could deposit the stores and goods for the trading post at once, and then be off up the coast for sea otter. McDougal and the others, experienced in such matters, insisted on seeking a site up the river where situation would offer some points of natural defense. The site selected by McDougal was on Point George about twelve miles up the stream. Here was a sheltered harbor where small vessels could anchor within fifty yards of the beach. The *Tonquin* rode at anchor off the point, and the Captain fumed as days and weeks flitted by while the partners directed the building of the fort, with its living quarters, storehouse, and powder magazine, or knocked off work to hold council with inquisitive swarms of Indians led by their chief, old Comcomly, the one-eyed. Since the one gentleman

was on ship and the other on shore, Thorn and McDougal could no longer match each other in spoken invective. So they sent splenetic epistles back and forth across the little stretch of water. By the end of May, however, the fort was completed. It was built of bark-covered logs and was enclosed in a stockade of log palings and mounted with guns after the model of the fur-trading forts in the North. In honor of John Jacob Astor it was named Astoria. On the 1st of June, the *Tonquin*, with Alexander Mackay and a clerk named Lewis aboard, took sail. A strong wind held her back within the bay for four days, but on the fifth she crossed the bar and turned northward towards Vancouver Island.

While the *Tonquin* was moving on her way and the men at Astoria were busy with their final touches to the fort and in planting various grain and vegetable seeds which they had brought with them, another fort was in building far up on the north branch of the Columbia at the mouth of the Spokane. The man who was building that fort was David Thompson, the Nor'wester.

In the autumn of the previous year (1810) Thompson had set out from Fort William to make

his way to the Columbia. The natural route for him lay through the Rockies from the North Saskatchewan. But this pass was closed to him by the Piegans. He had been obliged, therefore, to ascend the Athabaska and to cross the mountains through the thick snows of Athabaska Pass. The crossing occupied weeks. It was nearly the end of January when Thompson and his men reached the Columbia near the mouth of the Canoe River. There they camped until spring.

In June Thompson was building his fort on the Spokane; and Indians were passing the news from village to village down the Columbia, till presently this spicy bit of wilderness gossip was retailed to the citizens of Astoria. The Astorians supposed that the men of whom they heard these tidings were Astor's Overlanders. But, one day in the middle of July, a canoe swept down towards the fort, with the British flag flying. McDougal and the Stuarts, who had rushed to the shore to welcome Astor's Overlanders, greeted instead the old crony of their grand battle days in Canada. Thompson was tossed from one rough embrace to another, then carried into the fort and, with his party of eight men, treated to the best that Astoria afforded. In consideration of Thompson's errand it has been

customary to censure McDougal and the other partners for their reception of him; but on reflection it seems easy to take a more human view of the matter. It would require more than business rivalry or business loyalty to make such men forget what their long comradeship in the wilderness had meant to them in times when each had proved his claim to that "Fortitude in Distress," which had welded the Nor'westers into a clan, hardy and proud. Then, too, Thompson with his record of skill and success under enormous difficulties must have been a welcome relief to McDougal and the Stuarts after their long session with Jonathan Thorn, whose stupidity and obstinacy had sent eight lives into eclipse before ever a log of Astor's fort was laid in place. When Thompson ascended the river — which, now, he had explored from its source to its mouth — he was well provided with food and other necessities. David Stuart, with several clerks and *voyageurs*, set out at the same time to find good sites for trading posts. And, when he and Thompson parted company, Stuart acted in Astor's interests and stole a march on the Nor'wester by choosing a site at the mouth of the Okanogan where he could compete for the trade which Thompson was expecting to attract to his

fort on the Spokane. There Stuart established himself. Thompson in the meantime was faring north again through the mountains to put in the trapping season among the Salish and then to take the long route by lake and river to Montreal.

At Astoria the little colony now began eagerly to watch for the sails of the *Tonquin*. It was a watch kept in vain. The history of the *Tonquin* after she crossed the bar is barely more than a rumor, for the diarists at Astoria set down only so far as they were able to understand it the story told them by an Indian interpreter who was the only man to escape alive from the scene of disaster.

The *Tonquin* proceeded from Baker's Bay to Clayoquot on Vancouver Island. Here she dropped anchor and signaled for trade. This was done against the entreaties of the interpreter, who warned Captain Thorn that the natives of Nootka and Clayoquot were hostile and treacherous. Thorn was not one to listen to warnings. He was a courageous man, but he seems not to have been able to differentiate between fear and caution in other men. Not only did he insist on trading in that region, but he ignored all advice about letting the natives aboard only in very small numbers. He

knew nothing of Indian character nor of the patience and tact which must be used in meeting their annoying methods of barter. One day, when Mackay had gone ashore, Thorn spread out the goods for trade and proceeded to tell the Indians precisely what he would give for each otter-skin. The natives understood neither Thorn nor his ways. They demanded more and still more. He refused to trade with them at all. His anger only served to arouse their mockery and insolence. One old chief, who had led the others in bidding up the prices, pattered about the deck after Thorn, poking an otter-skin at him and alternately quoting a price and hurling a gibe. In exasperation Thorn snatched the pelt and smacked the chief's face with it. Then he thrust the old native off the deck and kicked the furs about. The Indians gathered up their pelts and made for the shore in a fury.

When Mackay returned and learned what had taken place, he urged Thorn to set sail at once. Mackay knew the vengeful Indian temper. Thorn treated his counsel with contempt. Had they not cannon and firearms on board? Then why should they run from a band of naked savages? He refused to make any preparations against a surprise attack and turned in for the night.

Before Thorn or Mackay was awake in the early morning the Indians came alongside in their huge canoes and made signs to the man on watch that they had come to trade. They were apparently unarmed. As no orders to the contrary had been issued, the Indians were allowed on board. Canoes clustered about the ship with both men and women in them. The women remained in the canoes while the men clambered over the ship's sides. Mackay and Thorn hastily came on deck, and Mackay again urged the captain to weigh anchor. Thorn refused. The Indians offered to trade on terms satisfactory to Thorn and pelts were soon rapidly changing hands. The principal articles demanded in trade were blankets and knives. The blankets the men threw overboard into the canoes, but the knives they kept in their hands. As soon as each man had sold his furs and received his exchange, he moved off and took up a position on another part of the deck. By the time that the furs were all disposed of, there were several armed natives grouped advantageously near to every white man on deck.

The anchor was being weighed, men had gone aloft to make sail, and the captain ordered the decks cleared. With a yell, the Indians began the real work they had come there to do.

Lewis, the clerk, was stabbed in the back as he leaned over a bale of blankets and fell down the companionway. Mackay, who was sitting on the taffrail, was clubbed. He fell overboard and was received on the knives of the women in the canoes. Thorn made a fierce fight for his life. He was a big burly man of great strength, and he laid one or two Indians low with his fists and a clasp-knife before he was clubbed down and stabbed to death. Every white man on deck fell. There were seven men aloft. Four of them escaped by leaping through the hatch. They reached the cabin where they found the wounded Lewis. Here the five men barricaded themselves in, cut holes for their firearms, and began pouring out a fire that drove the natives back to their canoes and to the shore.

During the night the four men who were unhurt lowered the ship's boat and stole out upon the tide, with the desperate resolve of trying to row back to Astoria. When morning came the Indians, reconnoitering from a safe distance, saw a white man on deck. It was evident that he was badly hurt and very weak. He made friendly signs to them, inviting them on board. The opportunity for rich plunder was too alluring to be resisted. Presently a few natives climbed over the taffrail. The deck

was empty save for the furs, the bales of blankets, and other merchandise. The one survivor had crawled below again; and there was no sign of the other men whose musket fire had driven off the savages after their victory of the preceding day. They signaled to their tribesmen who were lingering at a safe distance. And it was not long before the deck was thronged with Indians, while crowded canoes, rocking on the tide, rubbed against the ship's sides.

But, if yesterday had seen an Indian's vengeance, today was to see a white man's. Satisfied at last with the numbers of his foes which he had lured on board the *Tonquin* and about her, this sole survivor dragged himself to the powder magazine. The natives on shore heard a sound new to them and more terrible than the roar of the Thunder-God; it was the one note of a dying white man's war song. The *Tonquin* was blown into slivers by the explosion and the bay was strewn with bits of what had once been human bodies. Of over a hundred warriors who had been jauntily gathering the spoils on deck, only a few gruesome traces were washed ashore. Those in the canoes also suffered havoc. A number were killed; many were wounded and mangled.

There was mourning in Clayoquot. The death

fires burned along the shore; and wailing was heard in the great cedar houses which, last night, had echoed to the savage chant of triumph.

But a day or so later the sea cast up to the Clayoquots a sacrifice to appease the spirits of their slain. The four seamen who had left the *Tonquin* in the mad hope of reaching Astoria were captured as they slept in a cave. They were dragged to the village and were put to death after prolonged torture.

In substance, this was the story which the interpreter told to the Astorians when at last he arrived at the mouth of the Columbia with an Indian fishing fleet. Rumors had already reached the little colony by other Indians from the Strait of Juan de Fuca, who had come to the bay for sturgeon fishing. Indian gossip credited the Russians with having instigated the attack on the *Tonquin*. Indeed, the Indians still maintain that the attacks on American ships in those years were due to Russian influence.

The story of the *Tonquin's* fate and the depletion of the little colony, through the departure of Stuart and his party to the new inland trading post, moved the Indians on the lower Columbia to ask themselves whether they really desired the

presence of the white men at Astoria. The vote was in the negative. McDougal knew Indians. Therefore he was quickly suspicious when he found them unwilling to trade and, in fact, deserting the fort where they had so recently made themselves very much at home. He set his men to work at once, strengthening barricades, putting guns in place, and making other preparations against attack. Then, all being in readiness, McDougal sent for Comcomly and other headmen, charged them with their perfidy, and vowed a terrible vengeance if they did not immediately mend their ways. He knew how terrified the natives were of the smallpox, which they believed to be the work of a devil. McDougal held up a corked bottle, declaring that it contained the spirit of the smallpox. Unless they behaved he would let loose that disfiguring and devastating devil. Hastily they assured him that they would behave. He was the greatest of all great chiefs. They would certainly behave.

McDougal, as time went on — so we learn — thought it best not to rely entirely upon the supernatural. Suppose a jealous medicine man were to steal the bottle and drop it to the bottom of the river? Such a contingency was not at all

improbable. For the cement of good-will natural means would serve better than supernatural in the long run. So at last there came a day when the old Nor'wester girded himself with amity and put fair words in his mouth and went a-wooing. After sufficient gifts and palaver had been exchanged, one of the many Misses Comcomly became Mistress McDougal.

Presumably the marriage was a happy one, for it inspired other Astorians to seek connubial bliss. And, in time, old Comcomly, the one-eyed, came to be known as "the father-in-law of Astoria."

CHAPTER V

ASTOR'S OVERLANDERS

THE story of Astor's Overlanders is a tale of heroism which enriches history even while it reveals deplorable ignorance and inefficiency. Here, as in his maritime enterprise, Astor showed unwisdom in his choice of a leader. His own lack of actual experience beyond the frontier was most unfortunate for him, for it led to fatal mistakes in judgment. Apparently he could discern men's moral qualities, could perceive strength of will, courage, rectitude. Jonathan Thorn had possessed these traits, and they were conspicuous in Wilson Price Hunt, the leader of the Overlanders. But Thorn's inadaptability completely offset his good traits and brought about disaster. And Hunt's ignorance of wilderness life came near to wrecking the overland expedition.

In July, 1810, Hunt went to Montreal to engage a brigade of *voyageurs*, taking with him Donald

Mackenzie, a fellow partner in Astor's Pacific Fur Company, formerly a Nor'wester. At Montreal Hunt and Mackenzie found the hand of the Nor'-westers everywhere against their efforts to recruit rivermen and they failed to enlist the crew they needed. They took what they could get, however, and headed up the Ottawa and across Lake Huron to Michilimackinac, there to augment their force from the horde of idle boatmen and trappers who lay about the strait every summer waiting for the trapping season. At Michilimackinac, too, Hunt and Mackenzie experienced difficulties. No sooner was a canoeman engaged and a sum in advance paid to him than some tavern-keeper or tradesman would appear with a bill against him. Hunt must either pay the bill, or lose his employee and the money advanced to hold him to his bargain. Another cause of delay, quite as irritating, lay in the volatile temperament of the Canadian canoe-man. After Pierre or François had made his bargain and received his advance wages, he must celebrate — gather his friends and kin about him, carouse with them, sing and dance. Tomorrow, next day, or next week, would be time enough to embark; but today the wineshop beckoned, tonight the fiddles called.

At length the partners, with their train of vagabonds, were ready for the journey to St. Louis, across Lake Michigan, across Wisconsin, and down the Mississippi. They arrived at St. Louis on the 3d of September. Here Hunt, seeking to engage hunters and river boatmen, found Manuel Lisa of the Missouri Fur Company not one whit behind the Montreal traders in putting obstacles in his way. By the time that Hunt had manned and outfitted his expedition, it was too late in the year to set out; for the upper waters of the Missouri would be under ice before the boats could traverse more than the first five hundred miles of the river. But, apart from the expense of wintering sixty men in St. Louis, Hunt did not intend to leave his mercurial rivermen for months within reach of the taverns and of the machinations of the fertile Lisa. Towards the end of October he pushed far up the Missouri with his crew to the mouth of the Nodaway some miles above the site of St. Joseph. On this favorable spot in a good game country the Overlanders went into camp. Two days later the first blasts of winter closed the river immediately north of them.

In January, 1811, Hunt returned to St. Louis. He was anxious to engage more hunters, expert

riflemen who might be needed not only to hunt game but to defend the expedition from hostile Indians. And he must also procure an interpreter to ease the party's way through the Sioux country where, according to report, he was likely to meet with serious trouble. On this quest Hunt encountered new difficulties, for the Missouri Fur Company was also equipping an expedition not only for trade but to make a search for one of their partners, Andrew Henry, who had been forced by the savage Blackfeet to abandon the Company's fort at Three Forks. Thus there was a lively competition for riflemen, in the midst of which Hunt was anything but gladdened to see five of his own hunters from the camp on the Missouri trudge into St. Louis. They had quarreled with the partners in charge of the camp. Hunt could persuade only two of them to return with him.

Hunt's pirogues put out from St. Louis on the 11th of March. Despite his setbacks, he felt himself fortunate in having the services of Pierre Dorion, a half-breed, whose father had served Lewis and Clark as interpreter among the Sioux. Pierre Dorion had been an employee of the Missouri Fur Company, but had fallen out with Lisa over a whiskey bill. Pierre considered it an

unpardonable wrong that Lisa had charged whiskey against him at ten dollars a quart. Therefore he engaged with Hunt the more willingly. But as Lisa must pass through the Sioux territory, he, too, had urgent need of Dorion, the only man available knowing the Sioux tongue. When blandishments failed to detach the half-breed from his new employers, Lisa quietly secured a writ relative to the whiskey debt and arranged to have Dorion served with it at St. Charles, on the way up the river. Thus the interpreter would be prevented from continuing with Hunt, and must take his choice of either joining Lisa's own party or remaining in durance vile and penniless in the little village of St. Charles. Lisa's scheme was foiled, however, by two English scientists traveling with Hunt, named Bradbury and Nuttall, who had in some way learned the plot and who warned Dorion. The enraged interpreter left the boats shortly before St. Charles came into view and slipped into the woods, promising to rejoin the brigade on the next day at a safe distance above the village.

At the moment of departure from St. Louis, Dorion had given Hunt an unwelcome surprise; he had arrived on the river bank with his Sioux wife and two small children and had refused to embark

without them. Now, as he left the boats below St. Charles, his wife and children and a bundle containing all his earthly goods went into the woods after him. But it was a lonely and disconsolate man who signaled from the shore the next morning. There had been a family tiff during the night and Pierre, always forcible in argument, had applied the logic of the rod. His wife, convinced but offended, had stolen away in the darkness taking with her the children and the bundle. Pierre's woe was so deep that Hunt halted the boats and sent a Canadian *voyageur* into the woods to seek for the lost woman, but without avail. On the following morning before daybreak, however, the distressed husband heard the voice of love calling to him from the opposite shore and woke the camp to share his joy. Hunt sent a canoe across; and the wife, the children, and the bundle were once more restored to their owner.

Hunt's next stopping point was the village of La Charette, at the mouth of Femme Osage Creek, the home, it will be recalled, of Daniel Boone, the famous Kentucky hunter, fighter, and explorer. Despite his seventy-five years, Boone had spent the preceding winter in the wilds trapping beaver and had returned with over fifty skins. Perhaps

only the influence of his sons and his wife kept him from casting in his lot with Hunt's party. The old pioneer stood on the bank as the boats pushed up the river and watched them out of sight.

Early on the next day the Overlanders saw a small bark canoe with a single occupant skimming down the tide. It was John Colter, returning to civilization after one of his lonely trapping forays in the Yellowstone. He had much to tell the Overlanders of the malignant Blackfeet; and though he was strongly tempted to join their great adventure, the charms of a newly wedded bride, who awaited him somewhere down the river, appealed to him at that time more than the lure of the wilderness.

Passing through the territory of the Osages, the Overlanders learned that there was war throughout the greater part of the Indian country; and that the Sioux had been out on raids during the preceding summer and could be expected to take the warpath in full force as soon as spring had cleared the prairies of snow. They heard, too, that the Sioux had determined to stop white traders from selling arms to other tribes with whom they were at war. And while the boats halted at Fort Osage, where they were greeted by Ramsay

Crooks, one of the partners from the Nodaway camp, they saw proof of the rumors of Indian unrest. A war party of Osages returned from an attack on an Iowa village and held high festival to celebrate the taking of seven scalps. There were dances, with triumphant shoutings, processions, and planting of the war pole by day, and torch-light processions and barbecues by night.

These excitements so thrilled the still undisciplined savage nature of Dorion's Indian wife that, when the hour for sailing came, she declined to go on; she would remain forever where such pleasant things were happening. Dorion, however, who had not forgotten the pangs which her absence had caused him earlier in the journey, was in no mind to go lamenting and lonely all the way to Astoria. He resorted again to the birch. Before Hunt could interpose, Dorion had convinced his mate that trivial amusements were not worthy to weigh against the duties and delights of matrimony.

By the middle of April the Overlanders joined their comrades at the mouth of the Nodaway, and, after a delay of some days, owing to the weather, they all started up the Missouri on their long journey to the Columbia. In the party, numbering about sixty, which Hunt was to lead, were four

partners besides himself, and these four were experienced frontiersmen. Donald Mackenzie, one-time Nor'wester, was a "winterer" of the Great North; Ramsay Crooks, a Scot, had traded and trapped on the plains with Robert McLellan, an old border fighter famed for his exploits and his marksmanship; and Joseph Miller had fought as a lieutenant under "Mad Anthony" Wayne. To any one of these men might Astor more wisely have entrusted his overland expedition. Mackenzie, indeed, had joined with the understanding that he was to share the command. But at the last minute Astor had reduced to a subordinate position the bluff Nor'wester who knew the wilderness as Astor knew his garden. Then there were the hunters, among them the Virginian John Day, a clerk named John Reed, the interpreter Dorion and his family, and the crew of *voyageurs*. On the 28th of April they camped at the mouth of the Platte River for breakfast. Here they saw more signs of Indian war. On the bank lay the frame of a bull boat. It had been used not long since to convey a raiding party across the river. Rolling smoke on the horizon and, at night, a red glare in the sky told of grass fires lighted by a fleeing band to cut off pursuers.

A few nights later as the party slept, save the guards, eleven Sioux warriors rushed into the camp yelling and brandishing tomahawks. Seized and overpowered, they protested that their visit was friendly. But Dorion, being familiar with Sioux customs, said that their naked state showed them to be members of a band defeated in war who had cast off their garments and ornaments and vowed to recover their honor as warriors through performing some act of blood. But for the prompt action of the guards the eleven devotees would there and then have retrieved their right to flaunt feathers. Hunt sent them across the river towards their own territory under ward of his riflemen, with a warning. He was not in a mood to appreciate Indian pleasantry of that nature. Two more of his hunters had deserted only a couple of days before. If they continued to desert as the need of them became greater, the situation promised to be serious enough. These frequent desertions by hunters inured to the wilderness and its dangers are in strong contrast to the loyalty and obedience of the men who served under Lewis and Clark. This is accounted for by Hunt's ignorance of the men he was dealing with. Apparently he knew neither how to allay grievances nor how to enforce law.

Lewis and Clark, themselves experienced in frontier life, could give initiative full play without relaxing the bonds of discipline.

Hunt had other anxieties. It will be remembered that two English scientists were traveling with the expedition. Bradbury, an elderly botanist and mineralogist, had been sent out by the Linnæan Society of Liverpool to make a collection of American flora. Nuttall, a younger man, was also a botanist. Bradbury carried a rifle, for he was a mild sportsman after the manner of English country gentlemen of his day; but Nuttall's sole weapons appear to have been his microscope and trowel. At every halting place, regardless of the Indian danger, the two scientists would wander off over the prairie in different directions each absorbed in his special pursuit. Did Nuttall discover a new plant, or Bradbury overturn a bit of mineral stone, instantly all warnings were forgotten. They would range farther and farther afield until recaptured by a band from their own party. Nuttall, armed only with his trowel, tripping out over the Indian prairie to dig for roots that were not for the pot, especially drew the amused contempt of the *voyageurs*. They called him "the fool." *Où est le fou?* became a byword of the camp.

One day, as the boats approached a bend in the river, Bradbury elected to leave his boat and walk across the stretch of prairie which lay in front of them. They were in the country of the fierce Teton Sioux, who were gathering in force, Hunt had just learned, to bar their progress and take away their goods and weapons. In vain Hunt reminded Bradbury of "Indian signs." Bradbury had seen "signs" of iron ore. With the huge portfolio in which he pressed flowers under his arm, his camp kettle slung on his back, and his rifle over his shoulder, he set off. This day the old gentleman met with an adventure. After having emptied his rifle noisily but ineffectively at some prairie dogs, he stood near the bank at the upper side of the bend peering at a mineral specimen through his microscope when he felt ungentle hands upon his shoulders. There ensued a few lively moments during which three or four savages alternately threatened him with a leveled crossbow and tried to drag him away to their main camp. Against their carnal weapon Bradbury opposed the arms of science. The crossbow was lowered before the charms of the scientist's pocket compass. When the novelty of the compass wore off and hands again descended on Bradbury's

shoulders, he produced the microscope. The fascination of this instrument fortunately held the attention of the Indians until the boats came up, when they fled.

The Indians visited the camp next day with a white man bearing a note from Manuel Lisa asking Hunt to wait for him so that the two bands might pass together through the Sioux country. In view of his experience of the Spaniard and his methods, Hunt did not regard the overture favorably. Moreover, he had heard from Ramsay Crooks and Robert McLellan of treachery which they believed to have been dealt them by Lisa in the previous year in the Indian country. Hunt decided not to wait. He sent Lisa an ambiguous, though a friendly, answer.

On the morning of the 26th of May, Hunt was deploring the loss of two more deserters when two canoes bearing white men hove in sight. The men were three hunters, Robinson, Hoback, and Reznor. They had been with Lisa's partner, Andrew Henry, on one of the head branches of the Columbia, where Henry had gone after the Blackfeet had driven him from the Three Forks of the Missouri. They were Kentuckians of the stripe of those great frontiersmen who won and held the Dark

and Bloody Ground. Robinson was a veteran of sixty-six years. He had been scalped in the Kentucky wars and wore a kerchief about his head to conceal his disfigurement. The three were on their way home to Kentucky; but, learning what was afoot here, they turned their canoes adrift on the stream and threw in their lot with the Overlanders.

A few days later the expedition confronted a Sioux war party some six hundred strong gathered on the river's bank. The Overlanders hastily loaded swivel guns and small arms and made ready to fight their way through. The Sioux, seeing these preparations, spread their buffalo robes on the ground — their sign of peace, as Dorion explained — and invited the white men to a council. Hunt, with the other partners and the interpreter, stepped ashore — followed, it should be added, by the elderly scientist, Bradbury, who was always eager to collect data concerning the aborigines. The calumet was passed round the circle and presents of tobacco and parched corn were brought from the boat. The demeanor of the white men was friendly and the gifts stacked beside Hunt were appetizing. And the warriors could see the hunters with their rifles on board the boats,

while the swivel guns pointed shorewards like fingers of benediction lifted over the peace council. The chiefs declared that they had meant to interfere with the white men's boats only because they believed they were carrying ammunition to the Arikaras, Minnetarees, and Mandans, with whom the Sioux were now at war. Since the white men were merely on their way to join their friends beyond the mountains, the Sioux had nothing but kindly feelings towards them.

Two days had barely passed when another large Indian band was sighted running down to the river as if to seize the boats in the channel ahead, which was narrowed by a sand bar. Immediately the men crouched low, their rifles ready. Miller felt a touch on his arm. Nuttall had risen to his feet and was peering at the flock of feathered warriors. "Sir," Miller heard the scientist ask with much animation, "don't you think these Indians much fatter and more robust than those of yesterday?" These fatter Indians, however, proved to be Arikaras and their allies, out for a skirmish with the Sioux. They jumped into the water and held out their hands in the way of the white man's greeting, and then hastened away to their towns up the river to prepare their people for the visit of the white

traders with the hope, of course, of a supply of arms.

The expedition was still some miles below the Arikara village when two Indians came up in haste to inform Hunt that another large trading boat was ascending the river. Manuel Lisa had read between the lines of Hunt's soft answer and was straining every nerve to overtake Astor's barges. Hunt thought it best to lie to and wait for the Spaniard. He seems to have spent the waiting time chiefly in calming the fiery McLellan, who had sworn to shoot Lisa on sight because of the Spaniard's machinations against himself and his partner Crooks among the Sioux the year before. Another member of Hunt's party whose soul turned to gall at the prospect of Lisa's society was Pierre Dorion. He remembered now not only the ten-dollar whiskey, not only the threat breathed into his ear in St. Louis, but also the sneaking writ that had been intended to lay him by the heels in St. Charles; and probably he charged up against Lisa those distressful hours spent without his adored mate and his children and his bundle. Brooding on his wrongs, Dorion sank into a sullen rage.

The Overlanders were traveling in four boats.

Lisa's party, which numbered twenty-four besides himself and a young sightseer named Henry Brackenridge, had one large boat, propelled by twenty rowers and mounting a swivel gun on the bow. Among this boat's occupants there sat a woman and her child — no other than the Bird-Woman, Sacajawea, and the small boy who had entered into the world while his heroic mother was on the march with Lewis and Clark. As on that journey, she accompanied her husband Toussaint Charboneau, the interpreter. The great event of her life, the crossing of the continent with Lewis and Clark, and the characters of those two brave adventurers had impressed the Bird-Woman with a deep love for the white race; and she had tried, in her humble fashion, to imitate their ways of life as far as she was able. But now, it seems, she was ill, perhaps drifting into a decline as do so many Indians after contact with the alien white people; and her desire was towards her own tribe, the far distant Shoshones, that her days might be finished among them. This will be our last glimpse of the intelligent and courageous Bird-Woman, who piloted Clark safely through the mountain passes on the homeward march.

And what of the little Charboneau, at this time about six years of age? Casting forward through-out some forty years, we find references to him in the annals of Oregon and Idaho traders. It appears natural enough that he should have struck out for the country of his mother's people and for that farther West of her wonderful journey, for these were surely the subjects of most of the stories she had told him in his childhood when they two sat in the fire's gleam and she spun for him the magical threads of romance, as mothers do all the world over.

For two days the rival traders traveled together in apparent good-will. Lisa, indeed, was so smooth-tongued and gracious that Dorion forgot his wrongs and accepted an invitation to visit the Spaniard's boat. Lisa plied the half-breed generously with whiskey and sought to win him from his allegiance. But Dorion had his own sense of honor; and not for bribes nor even for the liquor he too dearly loved would he consent to break his agreement. Lisa must have lost his temper at this inconvenient exhibition of rectitude, for he threatened to retain Dorion, forcibly if need be, to work out his old debt of ten dollars a quart. Dorion flew into a rage, left the boat, and went to Hunt at

once with the story. Lisa followed him but was not in time to prevent Dorion's revelations, if that were his object. There was a violent scene; and Dorion, whose blows were always readier than his words, struck Lisa. The noise of the brawl presently lured all lovers of excitement to the spot. Lisa had a knife, but Dorion seized a pair of pistols and so kept his foe at a distance. McLellan came up with his rifle, and Hunt had some difficulty again in persuading him to defer the payment of his vow.

Meanwhile the scientific Bradbury and the literary Brackenridge were doing their best to aid Hunt in soothing the combatants. Lisa, in his spleen, next hurled an insult at Hunt. Hunt's ire rose, and he challenged Lisa to a pistol duel. Both expeditions might have come to a permanent halt that night, had Bradbury and Brackenridge not succeeded in preventing the duel from taking place. It was Lisa who yielded. He realized, no doubt, that, if he fought Hunt and won, he would have Dorion and McLellan to settle with afterwards.

The two expeditions continued in company during the days following, but there was no further interchange of courtesies until they arrived before the Arikara village and pitched their camps

on opposite shores near the mouth of the Grand River (South Dakota). Lisa then sent Brackenridge to Hunt's tent with the suggestion that they should enter the village together with the outward appearance of amity, as it would be unwise to let the warriors have an inkling of the differences that existed between the white men. Hunt agreed the more readily because he preferred to have the Spaniard under his eye during his intercourse with these Indians who were new acquaintances of his but old customers of his adversary. McLellan saw to his rifle.

In his speech at the council in the village, Lisa dissipated in a great measure the suspicions and ill-feeling against him. He assured the Indians that, though his party and the Overlanders had separate interests in trade, he would resent any wrong done to his rivals as forcibly as if it were done to himself. He also lent Hunt every assistance in securing horses to convey his men and baggage overland. Hunt intended to leave the river at this point and to pursue his way across the plains, swinging southwesterly through the country of the Crow Indians and crossing the Rockies through the Big Horn Range. In this decision he had taken the advice of the three hunters,

Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner, who had urged him to avoid the dangerous territory of the Blackfeet.

Here, then, the Overlanders were to leave the trail of Lewis and Clark and blaze their own path to the sea. It was a foolhardy move; and Lisa might well smile and assist in expediting his rivals on their way to destruction, as he saw it. Had Hunt possessed a knowledge of the wilds and of Indians, he must surely have realized that sixty men, well armed, would have a good fighting chance against raiding parties of Blackfeet, but that sixty men with their mounts and pack horses would be courting disaster in launching into unknown regions where they might lack for game and water and for fodder for their horses. And, indeed, they might expect to lack their horses also, for the Crow Indians were the most skillful horse thieves on the plains. No wonder Lisa was all graciousness. He was to trade horses of his own, pastured among the Mandans, for Hunt's four excellent boats which would probably be carrying the Missouri Fur Company's pelts to St. Louis while the bones of the Astorians lay bleaching on the desert.

On the 18th of July the Overlanders parted with the scientists, who were returning to St. Louis, and set out from the Arikara village with eighty-two

horses, pursuing a southwesterly course across the Grand and Moreau rivers. Hunt had not been able to procure mounts for all his people. Most of the horses carried heavy packs containing ammunition, goods for trade, traps, Indian corn, corn meal, condensed soup, dried meat, and other essentials. Hunt and the other partners were on horseback. Dorion and his Sioux mate trudged together, she at his heels leading a horse on which were securely roped the little Dorions and the bundle. An addition made to the party in the Arikara village was a renegade white man named Edward Rose, a sullen creature, of a vicious appearance. Because Rose had lived for some years with the Crows, Hunt engaged him as interpreter.

Towards the end of July the Overlanders, on their southwestern route across the hot plains, fell in with a friendly band of Cheyennes, from whom they purchased thirty-six horses. The bales of baggage were reassorted and one horse was allotted to every two men. After two weeks spent in hunting and trading with the Cheyennes, the cavalcade crossed the Cheyenne River and moved on, now veering south towards the Big Horn Range. On the way, Rose approached some malcontents of the party with a plan to run off the pack horses with

their rich bales and join the Crows. These spoils, so he assured them, would win for them high positions in the tribe of his friends. Hunt forestalled the plot by the simple expedient of a bribe, consisting of half a year's pay, a horse, some beaver traps, and merchandise to be given Rose after he had guided the party through the country of his adopted brothers. Thus made sure of his own rise in the world, Rose ceased his altruistic efforts to promote the fortunes of others.

To supply so large a caravan with meat, the hunters ranged afield in small parties. On one occasion three of these hunters missed the trail, and there occurred another agonized separation of the Dorion family, for Pierre was with them. The men had been out for several days, and their comrades had given them up for lost when at last they rode into camp. The stoical look with which the Sioux woman faced her fear through those few days gave way to wild enthusiasm of joy when she saw her heavy-handed lord returning to her safe and sound. The peculiar domesticity of the Dorions Hunt seems to have regarded with a shocked wonder, for on this journey he was making his first acquaintance with the children of the wilderness in their own habitat. Before

this time he had known of them only what they chose to reveal across his trading counters in St. Louis.

Hunt's attitude of mind, as well as his material data, was passed on to Washington Irving. We cannot overpay Irving in thanks for the valuable record he made for us from the letters and diaries of the Astorians. But the heart of the life he sought to picture was hidden from him. Hunt and Thorn, men bred in his own world, he understood; but Nor'westers, *voyageurs*, Indians — and the bond between the wild Dorions — were enigmatical to him.

In the furnace heat of mid-August the Overlanders drove on towards the red sandstone crags of the Black Hills, which stretched across the horizon like flames caught and fixed in fantastic outlines by the gods of the mountains. On the heights of that red barrier, said the Indians of the plains, these gods or spirits dwelt. And sometimes they spoke, not only in the thunders they sent hurtling through the sky, but in calm days and even in the silent starry nights when all save gods slept. These reverberations, heard in the Rockies as well as in the Black Hills, have been variously if not yet conclusively explained. Lewis

and Clark describe the sound as consisting sometimes of one stroke, sometimes of several loud discharges in quick succession, and resembling closely the sound of a six-pound cannon at a distance of three miles. In some regions of the Yellowstone the sound has a more musical character, suggesting that the gods in those flaming towers have relaxed from wrath to listen while their bards strike upon the strings of a thousand harps.

But whether in wrath or at their pleasures, the gods know well how to guard against any approach to their fortresses of sculptured fire, as the Overlanders, being only mortals, soon learned. Here and there, a corridor would seem to invite them, but it led only to another barred door; and there was little game in these mock passes. Still seeking a way through, they moved southward for several days, and then turned west. Having found their way through the Black Hills, they were now traveling along the ridge which separates the branch waters of the Missouri from those of the Yellowstone; and they were steering their course by the summits of the Big Horn Range far to the west of them. They stumbled upon an Indian trail and followed it for two days into the mountains. Water was scarce and the heat stifling. They saw

no more buffalo, for the defiles were bare of grass. Corn meal and a wolf served them for supper one night; and a small stream gladdened their parched throats after twenty-five miles along a waterless route. After another long stretch of hard travel they came out at last upon green sward and water at one of the forks of the Powder River. They took a slow pace up the bank of the river, for buffalo were plentiful here and the hunters were busily killing and drying meat. On the 30th of August they camped near the southern end of the Big Horn Mountains. They had traveled nearly four hundred miles since leaving the Arikara village.

Here they were visited by two scouts from a band of Crows. It was evident that the Indians had kept Hunt's party under observation for some days. Through Rose, the interpreter, amicable relations were established with this band and fresh horses were procured. Then the Overlanders hastened on; they were probably none too certain of keeping the horses they had paid for in goods if the Crows should take a notion to recover them. But the ravines they now entered led nowhere and, after a day of checkmate, they returned to the vicinity of their last encampment. Rose, who had been left with his adopted Crow brethren, came into camp

the next morning. He bore a message from the Crow chief inviting the party of white men to accompany his band across the mountains. As Hunt's own attempts to find a pass over the hills had been fruitless, he accepted the chief's offer, albeit with misgivings. So into the narrow mountain trail they went, the Crows leading the way and the white men following. If the Crows were famed for their horse stealing they were no less justly famed for their horsemanship. Every man, woman, and child rode, and their small-hoofed wiry ponies could cling to the face of a cliff and dash along the rocky ledges with the surety of antelopes. Even the two-year-old children rode, strapped with buffalo thongs upon their own ponies. Absaroka, the Bird-People or Sparrowhawks, was the true name of these Indians; but it is said that the French traders, who called them *Les gens des Corbeaux*, and their neighbors on the plains had named them after the prime thief of the bird tribe because, like crows, they flew down from their nests in the mountains, filched whatever took their fancy and bore it aloft where their robbed victims could not follow. However they acquired the appellation, they deserved it. But the name of Sparrowhawk might well have been given them, as a compliment

to their riding; for, on their spirited horses, they skimmed through the defiles and over the crests of the ridges like hawks on the wing.

The Crows soon left Hunt's party far behind, but they had shown him the road. Though Hunt had suspected their motives it appears that, for once at least, these mountain magpies had been moved by an honest impulse, for they did not lie in wait for the white men and steal their horses. The next day, the Overlanders met a small party of Shoshones with whom they crossed the second ridge of the Big Horn Mountains and hunted buffalo on the plain below. The Shoshones directed Hunt towards the Wind River, some thirty miles distant, and told him that it would lead him towards the pass which opened upon the south fork of the Columbia River, the Snake; and then went on their separate way.

After journeying up the Wind River for about eighty miles the Overlanders halted to make camp and to take council. In the five days of travel up the river, repeatedly crossing its windings, they had seen no game. Though Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner assured Hunt that, by tracing this river to its source and crossing the one ridge there, he would reach the headwaters of the Snake, Hunt

determined to veer again to the southwest where he had heard that another river cut a way through the mountains. There they would again see buffalo. As they reached a high ridge commanding a wide view, one of the hunters pointed to where three snowy peaks pierced the sky far to the west and said that at their feet lay the tributary of the Columbia. These peaks were the famous Three Tetons, first discovered, so far as we know, by the lone trapper, John Colter. In not following the bed of the Wind River towards these grand old pilots, Hunt made another error. The course he took for forty miles, southwesterly along high country touched here and there with snow, led him to the southward flowing waters of the Green River, the north fork of the Colorado. After several days of travel and hunting along its banks, as the river still continued southward, he turned northwest again to seek a pass through the mountains. Eight miles of riding led to a little mountain stream with buffalo feeding about it. Here the Overlanders camped to kill and dry meat enough for the remainder of their journey and to give men and horses a rest. During the eighteen days of September they had crossed two hundred and sixty miles of hard country.

On the 24th of September they broke camp. Their westerly course across the Gros Ventre Range led them to a stream where Hoback had trapped beaver a year before. Hoback's River, as it is still called, is a tributary of the Snake and therefore one of the source streams of the Columbia. They followed it through precipitous passes, where at times there was barely foothold for their horses, to its confluence with the turbulent and wider waters of the Snake. Here, in a rugged valley and within close view of the Three Tetons, they halted. There was great joy in camp that night. The evening meal was a feast of celebration; and no doubt a dance to the scraping of the fiddle and a shouting chorus were a part of the thank-offering made by the *voyageurs* and hunters who now believed that all their troubles were ended.

Near the head of the Snake River, then, the *voyageurs* set about canoe-making. As the expedition was now apparently almost within hail of the Columbia, four of the men who had joined for the purpose of hunting and trapping cast off from the party and launched into the wilds. The joy of the canoe-builders was short-lived. Three men whom Hunt had sent ahead to explore the river returned with word that it was not navigable.

Hoback and his two companions now suggested that the party should go on over the intervening ridge, the Snake River Range, to Andrew Henry's fort, on Henry's River, which joined the Snake farther down. On the 4th of October the Overlanders forded the river and began ascending the mountain. On the eighth in a squall of wind and snow they reached the fort. It was deserted.¹ Hunt took possession of the fort for the Pacific Fur Company, turned his horses loose and engaged two Shoshones to take charge of the horses and the fort. Here Hoback, Rezner, Robinson, another hunter named Cass, and Miller, one of the partners, left the party and set forth to hunt and trap.

On the 19th of October the Overlanders embarked on the little river running past the fort, which stood opposite the site of the present Egin, Idaho. Their fleet consisted of fifteen canoes. The stream that bore them presently joined with the waters of the Snake, over six hundred miles above the point where Lewis and Clark had launched their canoes on that river six years before. Down the widened flow sped the canoes, the *voyageurs* singing to the swift rhythmic strokes of their

¹ Henry by this time had reached the Arikara village and rejoined Lisa.

paddles. They made thirty miles before they camped for the night. The next day after twenty miles of easy navigation they began to meet with rapids. In places the men were obliged to make portage along the shore, in others to pass the canoes down stream by the towline. Their dangers and difficulties increased daily. They lost four canoes with most of the cargo in them and the life of one *voyageur*. At length, after some two hundred and fifty miles of water travel, they came to the grand canyon of the Snake where the river, at Shoshone Falls, plunges down through a narrow chasm between towering sides of sheer rock. Several men were sent out to explore. They returned, after having gone forty miles down the river, and reported that the channel continued impassable; the four canoes they had taken with them had been smashed. To add to the gravity of the situation, the party now had only five days' rations.

Here they resolved to separate into four parties. Mackenzie with four men turned northward, hoping that a march across the arid Snake River Plains would bring him ultimately to a navigable branch of the Columbia. McLellan with three men pressed on down along one bank of the Snake and Reed headed a party down the other. Ramsay

Crooks, with six men, went back up the river, hoping to encounter a Shoshone encampment where he might be able to procure food and a few horses. If this hope failed, he would make the long journey back to Henry's Fort and bring the horses for the relief of the main party, which would remain with Hunt at the canyon.

Hunt's men spent three days in caching their goods at the head of the canyon. They caught a few beaver which eked out their scanty food supply. On the third day Crooks and his men reappeared, having realized that the oncoming winter would make it impossible for them to reach Henry's Fort on foot and return through the mountains with the horses, even if they should find the horses still at the fort.

Hunt feared to follow Mackenzie's plan of striking across the lava desert of Snake River Plains because of the lack of water. He decided to keep on down the Snake. He divided his people into two bands. Crooks, with eighteen men, would take the south bank, and Hunt himself, with the same number of men and the Dorion family, the north bank. They set out on the 9th of November, each man carrying his share of the remaining provisions. They had cached most of their

baggage, but some blankets, ammunition, traps, and other essentials must be carried. Each man bore twenty pounds, in addition to his personal belongings. Dorion's wife bore her pack, frequently with the added weight of her two-year-old son, while the other child, aged four, marched beside her. There is no record of any complaint from her, although she was now nearing the time when she should give birth to a third child.

Though they followed the river, the high rocky banks made it impossible for them to descend for water, but on the second day they found some rain pools among the rocks. On the third day Hunt and his party reached a camp of Shoshones, from whom they purchased two dogs for their breakfast.

For nearly a month Hunt and his men, with the Sioux woman and her children, wandered through the mountains about the Snake. Sometimes they found a little game or met with Shoshones and obtained a couple of dogs or a few horses. Oftener they hungered. Rain in the gorges and snow and bitter winds on the ridges increased the pain of their travel. On the 6th of December they espied white men coming up the opposite bank. These were Crooks and his companions. Worn

with fatigue and emaciated from hunger, they were returning from a point about sixty miles down the river which they could not pass because there were no longer banks and ledges. The shores were mountain walls of rock rising almost perpendicularly from their base in the boiling waters to their crests of snow. Crooks and his party had, perforce, turned back. They had eaten their last meal — their moccasins.

Hunt killed the last horse but one and, hastily making a canoe out of the hide, sent across the river for Crooks. But after Crooks had been ferried across, the canoe was lost, swept away by the current, before food could be taken over to the famished men on the farther bank, and the turbulent waters forbade the employment of a raft. Since Crooks had found the way down the river impassable, Hunt was left with no choice; he also must turn back. Both parties now headed up the river along the opposite banks, retracing slowly their painful steps. Crooks was very ill and could not travel. Hunt remained with him, allowing the others to push on in advance. At length Crooks broke down and could go no farther without food. The one horse remaining belonged to Dorion. He had paid for it with a buffalo robe,

and it carried his children and his bundle. He refused to part with it, even for food. Fortunately, before that night they reached a Shoshone encampment and found a number of horses pawing and snuffing for grass under the light snow. Two or three of the hunters crept forward, drove the frightened Indians away, captured five horses, killed one, and set about cooking it. By means of a skin canoe which they made, cooked horse-flesh was now sent across the river to the starving band on the other side. These men had kept heroically on the march, though they had not tasted food for nearly ten days.

The majority of Hunt's men moved on doubling their course up the river they had lately descended. But John Day, who had crossed to Hunt's party from the south side, collapsed. He had been formerly in Crooks's employ in the Sioux country, and Crooks would not leave him now. Hunt was obliged to press on with his party, however, as his leadership and authority were needed, but he left behind with Crooks and Day a *voyageur* named Dubreuil, and two horses and some meat.

On the 15th of December Hunt's party came to a little river, probably Boisé Creek, which they had formerly crossed three weeks earlier. As its banks

were inviting, they followed them up some distance and camped in open level country. The weather was so cold that ice was running in the Snake, and snow fell frequently. On the twenty-third, following the lead of three Shoshones from a lodge on the creek who consented to guide them across the mountains, Hunt and his men crossed to the south side of the Snake, near the mouth of another river, probably the Payette or the Weiser. The two parties, now united, moved on together, save for the men left behind, Crooks, Day, and Dubreuil, and three *voyageurs*, who, being unable to march further, asked permission to remain among the Shoshones.

On the morning of the twenty-fourth the travelers turned westward and away from the Snake, but their hardships were not ended. The expedition, consisting now of thirty-two white men, Dorion's wife and children, the three Indian guides, and five horses, made headway slowly and painfully. One sparse meal a day hardly took the edge off their hunger. Rain and snow impeded their march. Heavy night frosts chilled them through as they lay in camp and gave an icy temperature to the streams they were obliged to ford from time to time, as they struck out northwesterly for the

chain of forested and snow-covered mountains rising between them and their goal.

In the bleak and snowy dawn of the thirtieth, the Sioux woman began to be in travail; and Hunt, divided between his sense of duty towards the expedition and his feelings of humanity, hesitated about taking up the day's march. Food was very scanty. Every hour of delay was dangerous. Dorion, too, urged him to go on. The party therefore pressed forward, while Dorion and his children remained with the woman. If Hunt cast an anxious look backward at the lonely camp in the wilderness, he may have seen, through the falling snow, the figure of the half-breed bent over the fire close to that dark heap on the ground where his mate contended against the malign powers of cold and starvation for the life bound up in hers.

On the next day the sky cleared. The Overlanders were approaching a Shoshone village south of the Blue Mountains in Oregon. The wintry sun shone on a little valley that stretched out before their gaze, dotted with Shoshone lodges and horses. Here they were hospitably received. On the following day Dorion tramped into the village, leading the skeleton horse which — perhaps with this emergency in mind — he had repeatedly

refused to have killed. On its back sat the Sioux woman with her newborn baby in her arms and her two-year-old boy dangling in a blanket fastened to her body.

It was New Year's Day, 1812, and the men held a celebration. After a banquet of roast horse-flesh, with boiled roots and entrées of dog and a punch composed of hot water, the musicians of the party produced their fiddles. The *voyageurs* danced and sang as in the days of their triumphant marches with Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and Simon Fraser of the Nor'westers. And these tattered and much buffeted men, lean from long hunger and hardship, dropped their troubles with the last sands from the glass of the old year.

For two days the Overlanders rested and fed among the Shoshones. Then once more they assailed the mountains, where sometimes they sank waist-deep in snow. By the 7th of January they were descending the farther slope. The hard travel and the cold had so weakened some of the men that they could not keep up with the main party. Before that night, the Sioux woman's baby died. On the next day they came upon another camp of friendly Indians, where they remained until the stragglers overtook them. Here they

procured horses and dogs, and here also they learned that a band of white men had recently gone down the river which flowed by this encampment into the Columbia. From the accounts of the party given him by the Indians, Hunt felt sure that these were the men led by Mackenzie and McLellan. It would seem that this river was the Umatilla which enters the Columbia some distance below the mouth of the Walla Walla. Leaving the river's bank, but keeping a westerly course, the Overlanders reached the Columbia on the 21st of January. Ten days later they were bargaining for canoes with the Indians at the Long Narrows. On the 15th of February the swift tide of the River of the West bore them round the promontory into safe harbor under the shadow of Astoria.

Here they found the men who had set off from the Snake River canyon under Mackenzie, McLellan, and Reed. The three parties had gravitated together in the hills and had forced their way through the canyons of the Seven Devils and Craig Mountains against the terrifying obstacles which had turned Hunt and Crooks back from this route. After twenty-one days of almost superhuman effort, peril, and hunger, they had reached

the navigable lower waters of the Snake and followed them into the Columbia. Nothing had been seen by these men of Crooks and Day and the *voyageurs* who had dropped out of the march; and they were now counted as lost.

McDougal and the colony within the fort held a grand celebration in honor of Hunt's arrival. Cannon and small arms were fired, liquor kegs were tapped, and the huge table in the banquet hall was spread with such delicacies as fish, beaver-tails, and roast venison. Fiddles leaped from their bags again on that night and the happy *voyageurs* danced. Well had they earned their right to jig to their heart's content, for, as canoe-men, they had vanquished strange waters, and during six terrible months they had marched with honors over more than two thousand perilous miles.

CHAPTER VI

ASTORIA UNDER THE NOR'WESTERS

THREE immediate tasks faced the Astorians as rainy spring succeeded rainy winter. Dispatches must be sent to Astor, branch trading posts must be established in the interior, and the goods buried in nine caches at the eastern end of the Snake canyon must be recovered.

The loss of the *Tonquin* meant that the letters and reports for Astor must be carried overland. The care of these papers was undertaken by John Reed, and he stowed them away in a bright tin box made specially for the purpose. Reed would make the overland journey to St. Louis in company with Robert McLellan, Ben Jones, a Kentucky hunter, and two *voyageurs*. Two other parties were to set out at the same time — one, under Robert Stuart, to take supplies to his uncle's fort on the Okanogan, and the other, consisting of two clerks, to go to the caches.

Accordingly, towards the end of March, 1812, the three parties launched canoes and ascended the river. Trouble met them at the Long Narrows. The Indians of the village of Wishram above the Narrows, noted for their arts of treachery and piracy, fell upon the canoes. A fight followed; and, before the white men were masters of the field, two Indians had been killed and Reed had been clubbed and wounded and his shining tin box had been stolen. His condition and the loss of the letters canceled the overland expedition for the time being. He and his party kept on to the Okanogan with Robert Stuart and, after some days at the fort there, turned back downstream with the two Stuarts. Not far from the Long Narrows they descried on the bank of the river two naked white men who, on nearer approach, proved to be Ramsay Crooks and John Day. To their old companions it seemed that they had risen from the grave. They had made their way from the Snake canyon through terrible hardship and had recently been stripped of their clothes and moccasins by the Indians at Wishram. The two unfortunates were taken aboard the canoes, fed, and clothed like chiefs in blankets and furs. On the 11th of May they were all back at Astoria.

But the problem still confronted them of how to send dispatches to Astor, and this notwithstanding that they now had a seagoing vessel. Two days before the canoes beached at Astoria, the *Beaver*, Astor's second ship, bearing supplies, was firing inquiring guns off Cape Disappointment. On the eleventh or twelfth a committee of welcome crossed the surfy bar to the ship's anchorage. First went a canoe in which were six Indian paddlers and old Comcomly, who had dressed himself in his best to do the honors. A barge followed propelled by eight *voyageurs* and bearing McDougal and McLellan. Piloted by this delighted reception committee the ship sailed over the bar and came to rest in Baker's Bay. The *Beaver* brought fifteen American laborers and six *voyageurs*, five clerks, including Ross Cox, and a partner named John Clarke, an American who had spent the greater part of his life as a trader in the British Northwest.

The *Beaver*, however, was not available to be sent round the Horn to New York. It was to be used to carry Hunt north to Alaska to bring to fruition Astor's plans with regard to the Russian trade. Astor had broached to the Russian Government his plan for securing to himself and the

Russians all the Pacific coast trade and so squeezing out the free traders. He would furnish the Russians with supplies and ship their furs with his own to Canton. It will be seen that Astor's aim was twofold: to use the coöperation of the Russian traders to drive other rivals off the field and, at the same time, to make the Russian traders dependent upon him — upon his transoceanic and coastwise ships and his colony at Astoria. Hunt was to sail to New Archangel (Sitka) to perfect these arrangements with the Russian official in authority at that port, bring away a cargo of furs, return to Astoria, and transfer to the *Beaver* all the furs collected there, and then dispatch the ship for China.

The reports to Astor could therefore not be sent by sea; it would still be necessary to carry them by land. The duty was undertaken by a party of seven men, headed by the younger Stuart and including Crooks, Day, McLellan, and a *voyageur* named LeClerc. At the same time, Donald Mackenzie and the newly arrived John Clarke, with a number of clerks, *voyageurs*, and hunters, made ready to go inland to seek out good trading sites and erect forts. On the 29th of June both expeditions headed up the Columbia their two barges

and ten canoes, while the cannon of Astoria roared a farewell to brave men.

Not far up the river, poor John Day began to show signs of derangement, and Stuart was obliged to send him back to Astoria in care of some Indians passing down on the way to trade at the fort. The parting with his old companion left Ramsay Crooks in great grief. He could not forget his recent experience with Day in the wilderness, when the two men — debilitated from hunger and hard travel and left behind in the barren wilds of the Snake canyon — had sustained and heartened each other, refusing to separate. This is a tale of nobility and loyalty and sacrifice which has never been written. All we have of it is a suggestion. They had no journal in which Day could have set down that the bleak winter sunset found them still in their rocky camp of yesterday and without food because Crooks was too ill to march, and Day himself too weak to range the hills hunting, even if he had dared to leave Crooks alone. And later, when Crooks was able to travel again and Day's wits had wandered beyond the cruel Snake country into the regions of more fantastic fears, there were no means at hand whereby Crooks might record how on such a day he had lost, under a new fall of

snow, the tracks of Hunt and his party which he had followed desperately for over a week; or how Indians were hovering among the rocks, surrounding the night's camp but would not draw near either to succor or to slay because of their awe of that supernatural control to which they attributed the ravings of the starved and demented white man.

It is a general belief among savages, and one common among the coast Indians, that madmen are under the control of spirits and are either to be wisely avoided or treated with special consideration and reverence. The Indians bound for Astoria, to whom Stuart and Crooks confided John Day in the last stage of his dementia, guarded him carefully and brought him safely to the fort. Day partially recovered and lived in Oregon for several years only to die in those Snake Mountains, the scene of his sufferings. So came to his end one of the two characters in a lost chapter from the book of Heroism. His name is "writ in water" — but not unto perishing. At least two streams west of the Yellowstone Park are known as "John Day's River," and the place of his death is marked by "Day's Defile."

On the 29th of July the combined parties,

numbering between fifty and sixty men, were trafficking with the Indians on the Walla Walla River for horses. The Walla Walla Indians, of the Chopunnish tribe, were a hospitable and kindly folk and the best equestrians west of the mountains. They owned large bands of horses and they equipped their mounts with crude high saddles after the Mexican fashion. They roamed far afield and are known to have traded with the Spanish in California from an early date, exchanging horses for vermilion and blankets. It was among these Indians, then, that the two expeditions took leave of each other and went on their separate ways.

Nine months later, on April 30, 1813, Robert Stuart and his six men reached St. Louis, accompanied by Miller, the partner who had deserted Hunt on the way out to turn trapper. They had a story to tell of various mishaps, the most serious of which was the theft of their horses by the Crows in the mountains, which forced them to continue on foot so that it became necessary to go into camp for the winter on the bank of the Platte River. In the Snake region Stuart found Miller, Robinson, Rezner, and Hoback — all in hunger and great distress, for they had been robbed of

their beaver catch and their guns by Indians. Miller had tasted wild life to his fill and now craved the savors of civilization; but the three hunters asked Stuart for another outfit of guns, traps, and other essentials. These were supplied them from the caches above the Snake canyon, and they pitched their tents again in the wilderness. Only three of the caches were found intact. The other six had been rifled of their contents by Shoshones led thither by the three *voyageurs* who had fallen out of Hunt's starving band and attached themselves to the Shoshones.

The trading caravan, which parted from Stuart at the Walla Walla River, separated into detachments. David Stuart and Alexander Ross proceeded to Stuart's Fort at the mouth of the Okanogan. Here Ross remained while Stuart pushed north up the Okanogan and established another post where now stands the town of Kamloops, British Columbia, at the forks of the Thompson. Far to the east John Clarke built Spokane House at the confluence of Cœur d'Alene and Spokane Rivers. Mackenzie and Ross Cox opened trade with the Chopunnish or Nez Percés from a post which appears to have been on the Clearwater some distance above its confluence

with the Snake. Other Astorians went far north up the Columbia to the Pend d'Oreille River, to ply trade with the Salish or Flatheads and the Kootenays, as well as with the "Children of the Sun," or Spokanes, and thus to assist John Clarke of Spokane House in cutting off trade from the posts of the Nor'westers set up on the Spokane and on the Pend d'Oreille rivers by David Thompson the year before. Some of the hunters who went out from Astoria during the winter of 1812 ranged southward into Oregon and are said to have explored five hundred miles inland from the mouth of the Willamette.¹

Between the winters of 1812 and 1814, the Astorians had spread their trade over an area of country roughly outlined by the Continental Divide on the east, the headwaters of the Willamette on the south, and the Thompson River,² New Caledonia (British Columbia) on the north.

But, as will be seen, it was not under Astor's banner that these forts were to flourish.

¹ This river is the Multnomah of Lewis and Clark, the Wallámot of Irving, the Willámet and Wylámit of earliest pioneer records. It has sadly strayed from its Indian origin in the silly modern spelling and pronunciation, which mean nothing.

² Discovered by Simon Fraser and named by him in honor of Thompson.

The Astorians — pushing into unexplored territory in the summer and fall of 1812 — did not know that war had been declared by the United States against Great Britain. Astor in New York knew it; and his anxiety was great. The Nor'westers in Montreal and Fort William knew it; and it was never the way of the Nor'westers to let the water freeze under their keels. The partners in Montreal and the "winterers" at Fort William, after hearing David Thompson's report on the little colony at Astoria, were resolved to enter at once strongly into contest for trade on the Columbia. The War of 1812 fell about opportunely for them; it enabled them to color their plans in national and patriotic tints. War or no war, they would have sent a trading expedition to the mouth of the Columbia to battle by their own methods against the Astorians. But the war gave them cause to ask a warship of His Majesty. That would be the swifter way to take the trade — and, with it, Astoria. So the arrangements were made. Convoyed by the *Raccoon*, the ship *Isaac Todd*, with a group of Nor'westers aboard of her, was to enter the River of the West. And another expedition was to leave Fort William, paddling and portaging through the maze of waters and mountains from

Lake Superior to the Columbia, and along that great artery to greet the *Isaac Todd* in the bay.

Meanwhile Astor petitioned the American Government for protection for his fort. In response the Government somewhat tardily prepared to send the frigate *Adams* to Astoria, but, at the last moment, canceled the order because her crew was needed to supplement the scanty force on Lake Ontario. And the supply ship which Astor had commissioned to accompany the *Adams* was held in New York harbor by the British blockade. The *Lark*, however, another boat, had sailed with supplies and more traders before the blockade; and Astor could only hope that she would reach Astoria safely and that the men aboard, joining with the Astorians, would be able to hold the fort until the Government could send aid. He may have felt that his hope was a forlorn one, for he remembered, doubtless with misgivings, that McDougal and most of the men at the fort were not only Canadians but old Nor'westers. And Thorn of the lost *Tonquin*, even before war had come to complicate further the already complex ethics of men trained in the Nor'westers' school, had written to him more than once his unfavorable opinion of McDougal's loyalty.

McDougal learned in January, 1813, of the Nor'westers' plans. In that month Donald Mackenzie, just arrived from up the river, brought the word to Astoria. He told how John George McTavish, a Nor'wester trading on the upper Columbia, had dropped in at Spokane House and had confided to both Clarke and Mackenzie what was in the wind. And McTavish had drawn a long bow, as the saying goes; he had spoken of bombardments and wholesale destruction, perhaps also of dungeons for renegade Canadians, and incidentally of a trip he himself meant to make in the spring to contest for the trade at Astoria.

McDougal laid Mackenzie's news before the little group of Astorians and after agitated discussion came to the decision to abandon Astoria in the spring and depart across the mountains for St. Louis. He sent out Mackenzie, Reed, and another clerk named Seton to the forts on the Okanogan, the Pend d'Oreille, and the Spokane, to inform the partners at these interior posts of the intended evacuation, instructing them to bring their furs and goods to the mouth of the Walla Walla, whence they would proceed together to Astoria, protected by their numbers from the pilfering Indians below. They were to trade all their

merchandise with the Walla Wallas for horses, keeping only their supply of provisions. Thus provided with sufficient horses to carry the men and the bales of furs that now stocked the warehouses, McDougal planned to make the great hegira of the Astorians on the 1st of July, the earliest moment when they could hope to be ready for departure.

From these instructions it does not yet appear that McDougal was doing any less than his best to safeguard Astor's interests, as well as his own and the interests of the other partners. The plan fell through because David Stuart and Clarke, not liking it, failed to make the necessary purchases of mounts and smoked fish and meat for the journey. McDougal did not become aware of their lack of coöperation until the middle of June, when they finally arrived with their furs. It was then too late to send men back to the Walla Wallas for horses — since Indians are not to be hurried in their trading — and to conclude the necessary preparations in time to cross the high mountains before the descent of winter.

The journey must be abandoned, therefore, until the following year; and what the situation would be then none could foresee. A new peril had been added by the stupid brutality of Clarke and

Farnham, a Vermonter, one of the clerks. These two men, while among the Nez Percés, had seized and executed an Indian for stealing a silver cup from Clarke. The other partners strongly condemned the act — this was not the Canadian way of dealing with Indians — but the mischief was done. We shall see later how the offended tribe took their revenge.

To add to McDougal's perplexities, there were presently visitors at Astoria. Down the river came John George McTavish of Fort William and his retinue of *voyageurs* and hunters. It was a pretty demonstration of the old Nor'wester spirit that they made, as the fleet of canoes swung into harbor beside the fort. The men were dressed in holiday garb — colored fringes dangled from their caps and shirts, little bells and gay beads clinked among the fringes of their leggings and sleeves — and the boatman's songs of Old Canada swelled from their throats. The brigade went into camp, while McTavish made himself at home in Astoria and was given his freedom of the best the fort had to offer.

McDougal is under suspicion for his reception of McTavish. Yet it may well appear that the wily Scotch laird of Astoria was trying to play his game

as cannily as possible, seeing that his partners, Stuart and Clarke, by failing to buy horses, had checked his best move. There was certainly nothing to be gained by making a foe of McTavish, for the arrival of the *Isaac Todd* and the *Raccoon* might any day make him the Chief Factor of Astoria.

It should be borne in mind, too, that Hunt and the *Beaver* were very long overdue. Unknown to the Astorians, Hunt had changed his plans. Fearing to risk a valuable cargo of sea-otter pelts in crossing the river bar, he had kept on to the Sandwich Islands. He intended to await there the *Lark*, the supply vessel which Astor was to send out, and to return in her to Astoria while the *Beaver* continued her course to Canton. No chronicler has yet doubted the excellence of Hunt's intentions. His motives were always of the best, but the results of his initiative were never fortunate. The belief that Hunt and the *Beaver* had come to disaster influenced not only McDougal; even the obstinate spirit of Stuart was now cast down by it. The upshot of the gloomy deliberations of the partners was that, when McTavish desired to purchase some goods for trade, they sold him not the goods alone but the Spokane trading post. He was to pay in horses to be delivered in the following

spring. Three of the Astorians then requested and received of McDougal papers of discharge and enrolled with McTavish. The partners drew up a statement of conditions, setting forth their reasons for abandoning Astoria and the outlying posts, and gave it to McTavish to forward for them to Astor by the winter express which the Nor'westers sent out annually from Fort William to Montreal. And on the 5th of July McTavish took leave of the despondent Astorians and was borne upstream by his belled and chanting paddlemen.

The partners decided to add to their stock of furs during the winter, rather than to idle away the six months before their departure. Stuart returned to the post at the mouth of the Okanogan; Clarke went to the Pend d'Oreille River; Mackenzie, with a body of hunters, to the Willamette and Reed, with the Dorion family and five *voyageurs* including Le Clerc, undertook to trap in the Snake River country. McDougal and forty men remained at Astoria, not a little apprehensive concerning the tribes in their immediate vicinity. It was in this summer month of July, 1813, that McDougal, having exhausted all other means of terrorism and diplomacy, offered himself — a more or less willing sacrifice — for the safety of

the Astorians and became Comcomly's son-in-law. And exactly one month later, to the very date, his spouse's brother burst into the bridal bower with news of a ship in the offing. There was great excitement within the fort. Was it the *Isaac Todd*? Or the *Beaver* returned after a year away, like a ghost from Neptune's realm? Was it His Majesty's ship *Raccoon* with guns to batter down the fort? Nearer came the ship and now the watchers could see the Stars and Stripes at her masthead. Shouting with joy, they rushed to the guns and fired a salute. McDougal was already rowing out in a small boat to meet the vessel. As twilight closed in the boat returned and McDougal and Hunt sprang ashore. The ship was the *Albatross*, chartered by Hunt for two thousand dollars at the Sandwich Islands, after he had waited in vain for months the coming of Astor's supply ship, the *Lark*, which, unknown to him, had been wrecked.

Though Hunt was greatly perturbed at the idea of abandoning Astor's vast schemes for the Pacific coast trade, he finally agreed to the decision which the other partners had made. His first concern was in regard to the furs. He resolved to sail in the *Albatross*, which was bound to the Marquesas

and the Sandwich Islands. He hoped to charter a vessel at the latter port in which to call for the furs and carry them to market in Canton. It was agreed that if he did not return, McDougal should make whatever arrangements he could with McTavish. Hunt confidently expected, however, to be back at Astoria by the 1st of January. Even so he would have been too late to have a voice as to the disposition of Astor's property, but as a matter of fact he did not return to the Columbia until the 28th of February.

On the 7th of October, about six weeks after Hunt's departure, John George McTavish with a brigade of seventy-five men in ten canoes were again wafted down the river to the jingle of bells and the music of boatmen's songs. He knew that the *Isaac Todd* and the attendant warship must be nearing Astoria and he intended to beat them there. The two Astorians, Mackenzie and Clarke, accompanied the brigade. They had fallen in with McTavish up the river while on their way to the upper posts and had turned back in the hope that they might succeed in gliding down ahead of him and so get the news to McDougal and plan their moves before the Nor'wester's arrival. But their chance never came to leave that Nor'wester

behind in the night. McTavish had given orders to his men to sleep with one eye open and an ear to the ground. The two Astorians did slip their canoes noiselessly into the stream one morning before dawn, but only to see, in the first light, two other canoes full abreast of them; and, with what cordiality they could muster, they said "Good morning" to McTavish.

Irving, taking a long-distance view, alleges that McDougal might have dictated his own terms, because the Nor'westers were out of provisions and had lost their ammunition; that he might, in fact, have made off up the river with the furs. Be that as it may, McDougal now surrendered Astoria to the Nor'westers and sold them, under agreement duly executed, Astor's stock of furs and goods and the buildings and boats, and all the forts on the Columbia and the Thompson at about a third of their value. Thus the rapacious Nor'westers had turned the trick not only against their rival, John Jacob Astor, but also against the British Government. A month later, when His Majesty's ship the *Raccoon* sailed into the river, it only remained to hoist the British flag above Astoria and to rechristen the captured post Fort George. There is no record saying that the

privilege of performing these loyal ceremonies was considered by His Majesty's officers as full compensation for the loss of the rich prize in furs, which they had made all speed to capture, having been egged on thereto daily by a Nor'wester they had aboard, John MacDonald of Garth. The feelings of the naval men, indeed, were such that they held no pleasant teas or banquets on board the *Raccoon* in honor of McDougal or MacDonald or McTavish. And, if McDougal's canny, unwarriorlike conduct so grieved His Majesty's bluff and simple mariners, what was the effect upon another heart in Astoria? Poor old Comcomly! Having witnessed the bloodless surrender of the fort, the great chief retreated to his lodge, hid his face and his one eye under his blanket and mourned that his peerless daughter — she of the proudest lineage and the flattest head among the Chinooks — should have married not a man but a squaw.

When Hunt returned in February to find Astor's property disposed of and the Union Jack waving in place of the Stars and Stripes, there, too, was McDougal, now acting as Chief Factor of the Nor'westers' post of Fort George. The dissolution of Astor's company, as provided for by contract, had left him free to rejoin the Canadians.

There remained nothing for Hunt to do but to receive the drafts on the North-West Company for the sum of the bargain price and arrange about forwarding them to Astor by a small party of Astorians headed by David Stuart, Clarke, and Mackenzie, who refused to join the Nor'westers and who were about to cross the mountains. Hunt then reëmbarked.¹

In April of that year (1814) the *Isaac Todd* arrived. The ship brought several distinguished lights of the North-West Company, among them an autocratic old gentleman named Donald McTavish, whose rôle was that of governor of the new domain, but whose chief aim in life was to keep a full goblet beside him, an aim rendered difficult by the continuous motion he made for emptying it. To assist him in solving his problem, old Donald had enlisted the services of a barmaid named Jane Barnes, whose Hebe-like skill and swiftness in pouring had won his heart in an English alehouse. This barmaid was the first white woman on the Columbia. Her flaxen curls, blue eyes, and ruddy cheeks so inflamed the heart of Comcomly's son that he offered one hundred sea-otter skins for

¹ Hunt returned to St. Louis and in 1822 was appointed Postmaster by President Monroe.

the privilege of marrying her; but the Governor would not surrender his fair one. Let us hope that the old Governor quaffed at least one of his many cups nightly to the bold adventuring spirit which had made young Jane Barnes shake the dust of a sailor's alehouse from her bare feet and dare the high seas and the savage wilds

For to admire and for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide.

A little longer than thirty days did Governor McTavish hold high revels. The journal of the younger Alexander Henry, who came to Astoria with one of the Nor'westers' canoe brigades, tells how high ran the tides of rum within and about Fort George. From other sources we learn that in June those tides came into conflict, so to speak, with the swollen flood of the Columbia, when a canoe bearing the Governor, Alexander Henry, and half a dozen *voyageurs*, all rather more than less unbalanced by their liquor, was overturned, and the Governor and Henry were drowned. When her patron sank inappropriately into a watery grave, what became of venturesome Jane? History seems to be mute. But there is a rumor to the effect that she sailed away to China and captured the

heart of a magnate of the East India Company, who built a palace for her.

In July of the previous year, it will be recalled, a party of seven men, with Pierre Dorion and his wife and children, had gone into the Snake River country under John Reed's leadership to trap. There Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner had joined them. When David Stuart, Clarke, Mackenzie, and their party of Astorians set out from Fort George on April 4, 1814, to cross the mountains, they expected to find Reed and his band, inform them of the changes that had occurred, and take them across country to St. Louis, if they should desire to go east rather than enlist with the Nor'westers. The latter choice was open to them, because it was a part of the agreement between McDougal and McTavish that the North-West Company should endeavor to find places for any of Astor's men who might wish to remain in the territory.

As Stuart and his companions neared the mouth of the Walla Walla they heard a voice hailing them in French. They turned in towards the bank. It was Dorion's wife calling to them. She had a tragic story to tell. In the winter she had gone

along the Clearwater with Pierre, Rezner, and LeClerc to a beaver stream. It was in the Nez Percés territory, a five-days' journey from Reed's post. While she was at her work of dressing skins in the hut one evening, LeClerc entered bleeding from wounds. Indians had fallen upon the three men suddenly and LeClerc alone had escaped alive — barely alive, for he collapsed as his tale was told. The Sioux woman quickly caught two of their horses, loaded her children and some food on one of them and, after binding up LeClerc's wounds as best she could, lifted and roped him upon the back of the other. Leading the horses she set off swiftly into the dark winter night towards Reed's trading post. Three days later as her keen eyes searched the landscape, she caught sight of a band of mounted Indians riding towards the east. She lifted LeClerc down and hid him with herself and her children and the horses. That night, a cold January night, she dared not make a fire. She snuggled her children in her garments to keep them warm but the cold was too severe upon LeClerc, weakened from wounds; and, when morning came, he was dead. On the next day, when the Sioux woman reached Reed's encampment, she found only the horrible traces of

slaughter. She fled towards the mountains where the Walla Walla cuts its way from Idaho into Washington; and there she camped in a ravine under a shelter of skins and cedar branches until spring, subsisting meagerly on the smoked flesh of her horses. When milder weather came, her food was nearly gone. She started out again with her children, crossed the mountain and went down along the river bank until she arrived among the hospitable Walla Wallas, who took her in and cared for her and her children.

The woman could give Stuart no reason for the massacre nor say by what tribe it had been committed. But, as Clarke heard her tale, perhaps his mind reverted to the scene he had staged nearly a year before in the vicinity of these murders. And, if so, he saw now with different eyes the gibbet of oars erected on the spring grass by the beaver stream and the Indian, who had been tempted to theft — like a child or a magpie — by a brightly gleaming cup, bound and slung in the noose and strangled while his tribesmen looked on with expressionless faces till his struggles were over and then took up his body and silently went on their way.

So was savagely snapped the savage bond which

had held Pierre and his Sioux mate together through harsh seasons within their tents and through hunger, cold, and the hourly peril of death in the wilderness. The last picture we have of Dorion's wife is as a fugitive among the Walla Wallas, telling her story to Stuart. But ten years later there was a young Indian named Baptiste in the brigades of the Hudson's Bay Company in Oregon, who was the eldest son of Pierre Dorion and the Sioux woman.

CHAPTER VII

THE KING OF OLD OREGON

THE war with Great Britain came to a close with the Treaty of Ghent in December, 1814. It was a peace without victory, and all captured territory, places, and possessions were to be restored to their former sovereignty. Astoria was not mentioned in the treaty, but in negotiations immediately subsequent a demand for its return was made by the United States. The British Government demurred on the ground that Astoria was not captured territory, since the valley of the Columbia was "considered as forming a part of His Majesty's dominions." Eventually, by a liberal construction of the term "possessions," Astoria, built by an American, was restored to the United States, but the question of the ownership of Oregon was left open.

Neither nation at that time had any real sense of the value of Oregon nor anything but the vaguest idea of its possible boundaries. Great

Britain did not then, or later, herself lay sovereign claim to the whole region. Her attitude was less aggressive than defensive; she desired to protect the British traders in their rights. Since the question of title had been mooted, in 1818 a convention provided that the two nations should jointly occupy the country for ten years. So began the Oregon dispute, which in course of time led perilously close to a third war with Great Britain.

Before the Joint Occupation Treaty of 1818, some effort was made by John Jacob Astor and his friends to have the *status quo ante bellum* clause in the Treaty of Ghent construed to cover his lost property at Astoria; but his arguments could hardly be convincing when it was disclosed that the North-West Company had paid — however inadequately — for everything received. Astor's heavy losses on the Columbia and at Michilimackinac through the war made him feel bitter. He never forgave McDougal for having sold his furs to the Nor'westers because, if the furs had been seized, he could have recovered their value under the treaty. The American Government could not collect salvage for John Jacob Astor, but it could assist him in another way. At his instigation Congress passed a law forbidding alien traders

to operate within the bounds of the United States except as *engagés* of Americans. This law was enacted in April, 1816. It served to keep British traders out of the territory about the Missouri and off the southern shores of the Great Lakes, but it could not, of course, touch the Nor'westers in their operations beyond the mountains. They still occupied Astor's forts by right of purchase. So the curfew knell which Astor had sounded for their especial benefit rang for the most part unheeded. No doubt it was discussed ironically at the suppers in the Beaver Club of Montreal when Astor appeared in that town to buy furs.

Astor was willing, even anxious, to send out more traders and ships to the Pacific Coast and to begin his daring scheme all over again. He had a spirit nothing could daunt, and his dream was worth any cost and all effort. But he realized that without support from his Government he could not hope to drive the Nor'westers from Oregon. Had he been granted his request for one military post on the Columbia with fifty soldiers and the rank of lieutenant for himself, he would have proceeded, even by arms, if need be, to make John Jacob Astor the master of the world's fur trade. But the American Government was not

mind to take any step contrary to the spirit of the treaty just entered into with England. The war, and the international agreements resulting from it, had made Astor's dream impossible of fulfillment. His affliction, however, was proportionately less than that of his partners and employees, if life be reckoned above money. In the massacre of the *Tonquin's* crew, in the wreck of the *Lark*, in the loss of life among the Overlanders by hardship and Indian wrath, not less than sixty-five men had perished. The partners, including McDougal, received nothing for their two years of toil and peril in the wilderness.

With his Pacific Fur Company dissolved and the business of his Southwest Company — his partnership with the Nor'westers in the Mackinaw trade — suspended by the war, Astor was obliged to confine his activities to his American Fur Company. To establish a western department at St. Louis, from which to send out his own traders into the fur country of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, was his immediate necessity if he wished to survive as a fur merchant. Here was Astor hoisted by his own petard. The Nor'westers, at their rollicking suppers, might well jest at the statute of 1816 which Astor had instigated against them; for the

Missouri Government, influenced by the St. Louis traders, used that statute to bar Astor from St. Louis and to permit the seizure of his goods and furs on the river on the pretext that, as British traders chiefly formed the personnel of his company, his business was unlawful. It was not until 1822 that he finally secured a foothold in St. Louis.

Meanwhile the Nor'westers, having got themselves into a sea of trouble, were obliged to strike their colors. Their piratical activities in the North had stabbed fully awake the drowsy old Hudson's Bay Company. The old Company had suffered many outrages from its rival. Not only were its brigades robbed on the march, but some of its trading posts were attacked, its furs and supplies carried off, and its servants wounded or killed by the lawless Nor'westers.

It was in 1811 that Lord Selkirk, a Scotch nobleman, purchased shares in the Hudson's Bay Company and acquired a vast tract of that Company's lands as a preliminary step in his scheme to found a colony on the Red River. In August, 1812, the first colonists arrived and set up their huts on the site of the present city of Winnipeg. The colony was soon beset by the Nor'westers. Failing to discourage the settlers by peaceable means, they

resorted to violence, which culminated in 1816, in the killing of the Governor of the colony and twenty settlers. Finally Lord Selkirk himself, armed with powers as a Justice of the Peace, and accompanied by a number of disbanded soldiers who desired to take up land, set out from Montreal to the Red River. He escaped the Nor'westers' hired assassins lying in wait for him, made a number of arrests at Fort William, and he sent the culprits east for trial. Thus it came about that John Jacob Astor, buying furs at the North-West Company's depots in Montreal, had the satisfaction of seeing in the clutches of the law some of the dare-devil gentry who had thwarted him.

The riotous conduct of the Nor'westers and its results were made the subject of parliamentary inquiry in Great Britain in 1819; and two years later the North-West Company was absorbed by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was a victory for Law and Order. The Nor'westers were strong men and they had done great things in the wilderness. Their Alexander Mackenzie had followed to the Arctic Ocean the great river which bears his name, and he was the first Anglo-Saxon explorer to cross North America overland to the Pacific. Their Simon Fraser had discovered the Fraser

River and passed down its roaring waters almost to the sea. Their David Thompson was the pioneer explorer of the whole Northwest and of the Columbia River from its source to its junction with the Snake. Through such men as these, and through violent, hardy men who knew no virtue save courage, had they conquered the wilds. But even in the wilds they could not defy the law. Beating against that rock, their company lost its existence.

So it was that the old Hudson's Bay Company, the ancient "Company of the Adventurers of England," established law and order in the Oregon country and raised over the forts built by the Astorians and appropriated by the Nor'westers the old banner with the letters H. B. C. in its center.

Hither, to Robert Gray's river, came to rule the man who is now known as the Father of Oregon or the King of Old Oregon. John McLoughlin was of Irish and Scotch blood and a Canadian by birth. He was born in 1784 in the parish of Rivière du Loup far down on the St. Lawrence River. For a time he practised medicine in Montreal. Later he went to Fort William as resident physician, developed an interest in the trade, and joined the Nor'westers as a wintering partner. He was not of the same quality as the roisterers who gathered

at Fort William. The uprightness of his character, the distinction of his bearing, and his dignified and kindly manner would have found fitter place from the first in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company.

It was as an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company that John McLoughlin was to come into his own and to make for himself a name imperishable in the annals of Oregon. He was not quite forty when he arrived on the Columbia, a man of striking appearance, about six feet four inches in height, broad-shouldered — a commanding figure. His piercing glance, overhanging brows, and broad forehead swept by a plume of white hair, won for him the title of "White Eagle" from the Indians. His official rank was Chief Factor, but his subordinates called him "Governor."

This man was to rule for twenty years as the autocratic monarch of the Pacific Northwest. It was a régime of equity in trade and of personal morals. McLoughlin took to wife the Indian widow of Alexander Mackay, who perished on the *Tonquin*, and adopted Mackay's children. He set the example of marital fidelity and compelled every man in his employ who had taken an Indian wife to conduct himself as if State and Church had

united them for life. He was, indeed, State and Church in Oregon. His moral force dominated white men and Indians alike.

In 1825 McLoughlin abandoned Fort George, or Astoria, and made his headquarters at his new Fort Vancouver, up the river about six miles north of the mouth of the Willamette. Fort Vancouver was an imposing structure, as befitted the Capitol of a primitive realm. It was built in the shape of a parallelogram. Its dimensions were 750 by 500 feet, and it was enclosed in a stockade of closely fitted timbers twenty feet high. Within the walls the space was divided into two courts with a number of wooden buildings facing on them. There was a powder magazine built of stone. McLoughlin's house stood in the center of the enclosure facing the huge gates. It was a large two-storied mansion of logs containing, besides the private rooms for himself and his family, an imposing dining room, a general smoking room, and a visitors' hall. Some of these rooms were decorated with mounted elks' heads, skins, Indian cedar blankets and baskets, and other ornaments contributed by admiring natives. In the court, at each side of the mansion's doors, stood two cannon with piles of balls. Below the fort on the edge of the river

stretched a growing village of cabins. Here lived the married laborers, servants, *voyageurs*, and hunters; and here also, in time, were built a hospital, a boathouse, a storehouse for cured salmon, barns, a mill, and a granary and dairy house.

Cultivation of the land from the fort to the river was begun at once, and gradually a farm extended on all sides and along the Columbia, about nine square miles in all. McLoughlin realized that the forts west of the mountains must be supplied with foodstuffs from some point within their own territory, as the cost, the risk, and the delay occasioned by the transportation of food by land and by sea from the eastern coast were too great. Accordingly, besides planting grain and vegetables, he imported a few cattle from California as soon as a vessel could be procured in which to bring them north. In time the King of Old Oregon could look from the upper rooms of his mansion over fifteen hundred cultivated acres and beyond to a grassy prairie where roamed more than a thousand cattle. There were dairy farms on the mainland and on Wapato Island in the mouth of the Willamette; on this island were the dairy buildings from which products were shipped north to the Russian posts. On the south side of the Columbia where the

Willamette empties itself there also gradually rose a few rough dwellings, spreading southward along the banks of the smaller stream. These were set up principally by *voyageurs* whose years of fighting white water were done. McLoughlin encouraged the old servants of the company to farm. Whatever these small farms produced above their owners' needs found a ready market among their neighbors and the Indians.

This was the real beginning of settlement in Old Oregon, out of which the States of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, and part of Montana, were afterwards carved. The story of this farthest "West" is a romance of the fur trade. The "Wests" between the Appalachians and the Rockies were first settled by bold and restless men who went into the wilderness and battled with the Indians for land. The fur trader truly had been there before them, for he was always the first man to enter the Indian's country, but he had founded no settlements. In Old Oregon, however, settlement was begun before ever a white-covered wagon crossed the plains. The beginning of Oregon City was in the first cabins raised and the first garden patches planted by old servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Settlers seeking homes, of the same kind as

those who reared villages in Kentucky and Missouri and Ohio, were to come later; but, when they came, they were to find a wilderness already yielding to the plough. They were to see neat cabins, arranged so as to outline narrow streets, and patches of planted grain, and to hear the tinkle of the dairy farm and the whir of gristmills and sawmills. Here, only, the fur trader did not pass with the beaver and the deer, leaving the land and the forest untouched. Even in the story of its first settlements, then, Old Oregon is still the romance of the fur trade. And it was John McLoughlin's idea — the planting of these tiny hamlets and farms where the aged *voyageurs* and hunters might settle down to safe and useful living, instead of being cast forth as human driftwood when their best days as brigade men were past.

McLoughlin's chief lieutenant was a young man whom he had brought from Fort William with him. "Black Douglas" was the sobriquet bestowed on this tall handsome youth with the dark skin and raven hair. James Douglas, afterwards prominent in British Columbia, was, like his chief, a Highlander born far from Bonnie Scotland. It was in Demerara, British Guiana, in 1803, that Douglas first saw the light. At twelve or fifteen

years of age he accompanied an elder brother to Montreal, where he presently became an apprentice in the North-West Company.

Another man in McLoughlin's ranks was Peter Skene Ogden, brigade leader and explorer. Ogden also had been a Nor'wester; and, like McLoughlin, he was born in Quebec. He was a rather short, rotund man with a high voice and a merry round face. He always had a jest for any one who would listen and was inordinately fond of practical jokes — characteristics which made him a striking contrast to his two dignified friends, Douglas and McLoughlin.

From Fort Vancouver McLoughlin sent out his brigades east, north, and south, and directed them to set up new trading posts. He sent Douglas to Fort St. James, on Stuart Lake in New Caledonia; and forts were erected throughout that northern territory as far as the Stikine and Taku Rivers. It was a far cry from these northern outposts to another erected about the same time on the Umpqua River in southwestern Oregon. Centrally situated in the interior on the Colville River, arose Fort Colville. This was an important post, a sort of clearing house or bookkeeping headquarters for the accounts of the whole country. The clerks

from the lesser posts brought their accounts to Fort Colville to be audited and transcribed for the annual report which was sent across country by the annual express brigade to Norway House on Lake Winnipeg.

From Fort Vancouver went out all the supplies for the northern forts west of the mountains. The route followed to the interior posts, roughly speaking, was by canoe and barge up the Columbia to Fort Okanogan, thence by horse to Kamloops Lake, then by water again down the Thompson River into the Fraser to supply Fort Langley near the mouth of the Fraser. To reach the northern posts in New Caledonia the brigades usually took to horse at Kamloops and rode the two hundred odd miles up the Fraser to Alexandria, where again they dipped upon the surface of that river and poled and towed upstream about 150 miles to Fort George at the mouth of the Nechaco, thence by the Nechaco River to the fort on Stuart Lake. The earliest brigades traversed more of the way by water, with sometimes long and hazardous portages.

Southward, the brigades under Ogden or Tom Mackay went into California. And eastward Ogden led his men beyond Salt Lake. He was

presumably the first white man to see Mount Shasta and the headwaters of Sacramento River. He discovered the Humboldt River. He penetrated into the desert of Nevada. He explored Idaho, a part of Utah, and tracked through the rugged country between the Snake and the Colorado.

In the Rockies and east of them Ogden's brigades met and clashed with the men of the American Fur Company — in which now, as partners, were Ramsay Crooks, John Clarke, and Robert Stuart — and with General Ashley's men from St. Louis, or the Rocky Mountain Traders, as they were called. Manuel Lisa was dead and the Missouri Fur Company was bankrupt; but Lisa's partner, Andrew Henry, had formed a new company with Ashley. The Rocky Mountain men paid the Indians double the Hudson's Bay Company's prices for furs and, defying the laws of their Government, they opened a fountain of rum in the wilderness in their effort to starve Ogden off the ground. They lay in wait for the H. B. C. brigades, or set the Indians on to attack them, and pirated their furs. It was war to the knife. The Blackfeet and Shoshones, profiting by the lessons thus inculcated in them, developed a fine impartiality towards all white traders and robbed all alike. One year they stole 180

beaver traps from Ashley's men. Ogden had his revenge, too, when some St. Louis traders were caught by snow in the hills. The Indians, under his influence, refused to make snowshoes for them until Ogden had bought at his own price the furs which they had hoped to market in St. Louis.

The use of liquor gave the St. Louis traders a large advantage over the H. B. C. men, for McLoughlin prohibited rum as an article of trade; but ultimately they suffered for it at the hands of the Indians to whom they had taught the vice of drunkenness. The Rocky Mountain Traders and the American Fur Company fought each other as bitterly as they fought the Hudson's Bay Company. Twice, at least, Rocky Mountain Traders who had been pilfered by rivals or Indians staggered, stripped and starving, into H. B. C. forts and asked for succor. McLoughlin's men received the unfortunates hospitably. They sent one man safely home to the Mandan country under escort. In the other case they dispatched a brigade to recover the furs and to lay down the law to the thieving tribe. Though they did not let the trader take out the furs, they paid him for them the market price and sent him also safely on his way.

It has been urged by some writers that the

Indians were stirred up to violence by the Hudson's Bay Company, not only in their attacks on traders but later in the massacre of American settlers in Oregon. That charge is well answered by the facts concerning settlement and trade in New Caledonia and Rupert's Land (now Canada), where, under the Company's rule continued for two centuries, trade was carried on and, later, settlement took place without a single massacre initiated by Indians. In Oregon, McLoughlin carried out the policy of the Company, which had a fixed price for furs and which meted out the same justice to an Indian as to a white man. If a white man had exhibited an Indian scalp in Old Oregon he would have been tried formally and hanged.

The fur brigades which went out east, north, and south from McLoughlin's rude castle on the great river were small armies under tried captains. A brigade would consist of fifteen or twenty-five white men, fifty or more Canadian, Indian, or half-breed trappers, and enough horses to supply each man with three. It was McLoughlin's policy to send the wives and families on the march with the men. The women cooked and dressed skins in the camps; and their presence acted as a deterrent to those wilder spirits among the men who would

have met war with war but for this responsibility. To the tribes the presence of women was always a sign of peaceful intent. The northern brigades bound for the upper Fraser set off in spring by water. Canoes and barges were launched upon the river to the singing of the *voyageurs*. The horse brigades for the south and east took the trail in autumn. A bugle called the men into line on the day of the march, and Highland pipers played them off. "King" McLoughlin, in his long black coat and his white choker, with his white eagle plume floating in the breeze and his gold-headed cane in his hand, stood in the gates to give them Godspeed. In every brigade there were fiddlers, and sometimes a Scot with his bagpipes went along to rouse the men in a black hour with *The Cock o' the North*.

Frequently McLoughlin and his wife rode out at the head of the Willamette brigades. The King's presence was dearly coveted by the men, and Mrs. McLoughlin delighted in these excursions which broke the monotony of life under a fixed roof. The lady of Fort Vancouver sat upon a gaily caparisoned steed with bits of silver and strings of bells clinking along her bridle reins and fringing her skirts. Her garments were fashioned

of the brightest colored cloths from the bales at the fort and she wore "a smile which might cause to blush and hang its head the broadest, warmest and most fragrant sunflower," while at her side, also handsomely arrayed, "rode her lord, King of the Columbia, and every inch a king, attended by a train of trappers under a chief trader each upon his best behaviour."

In addition to the H. B. C. trade by land, there swiftly grew up on the Pacific an overseas and coastwise trade. The overseas trade was chiefly with China. On the coast, vessels plied between Fort Vancouver and San Francisco, where the Company had a trading post, and between Fort Vancouver and the Russian posts in Alaska. These ships also carried supplies to the Company's forts on the northern coast. The Russian Fur Company did not like the proximity of British posts, and it induced the Russian Government to rescind the right of other than Russian vessels to navigate Russian streams. The Russian territory was held to extend farther south than McLoughlin's Fort Simpson on the Nass River, just north of the present Prince Rupert. The dispute ended, as far as the H. B. C. was concerned, in the lease by the Company of a strip

of the Alaskan coast, lying between Cape Spencer and Fort Simpson, for a rental of two thousand sea-otter skins yearly.

In this year (1839) the H. B. C. had a fleet of not less than half a dozen vessels sailing at regular seasons from Fort Vancouver. Among these was the *Beaver*, the first steamer on the Pacific coast. The *Beaver* had left London in 1835 as a sailing ship, rounded the Horn, and dropped anchor before Fort Vancouver in 1836. Here she was fitted out with machinery and became a steamboat. The *Beaver* lived to a ripe old age in the coast trade and was wrecked at last in the narrows at the entrance to Burrard Inlet. There, until a few years ago, the hulk lay impaled on the rocks below Stanley Park and could be seen by passengers on the great ocean liners entering and leaving the harbor of Vancouver, British Columbia.

McLoughlin urged his company to purchase the whole of Alaska from Russia. And, as the spirit of revolt blazed up in California, he pointed out the ease and advantage of acquiring that country also. He sent his son-in-law, Glen Rae, to San Francisco with funds and with instructions as to how to gamble in revolutions for the advantage of the H. B. C. This plan met with disaster when Glen

Rae met with a certain beautiful Carmencita and forgot all else. That is one of the stories. The other is that Rae picked as winner, among several revolutionary factions, the one which was doomed to be last under the wire. He achieved nothing but the loss of the Company's funds, and he shot himself rather than return and tell the whole truth to the "King" in Oregon.

But whether his plans went well or ill, McLoughlin did not lose the serenity in which his power was rooted. Not the whole strength of the Hudson's Bay Company could have made McLoughlin a king whose rule was unquestioned if his had not been a kingly spirit. Men who had brawled and roistered and known not the name of law under the Nor'westers' régime now stepped softly.

The daily life of the King and his courtiers and his motley subjects in the feudal realm of Old Oregon is worth a passing glance. There is nothing like it in the United States today, nor was there ever anything like it during the pioneer days in other parts of the country. Nowhere else on American soil have white men gone in numbers of a hundred or more with a train of employees and

built forts and houses, tilled fields, set up mills, and herded cattle in the midst of the red man's country, to be received by the natives not only as friends but as rulers.

The keynote of life at Fort Vancouver was work. On the Sabbath, men rested — and worshiped; but there was no idling on week days. A huge bell, mounted in the court on three poles and sheltered from rain by a small slanting roof, rang at five in the morning to rouse officers, clerks, and laborers to the day's duties. At eight it called them in from the fur houses, mills, and fields to breakfast, and at nine rang them out again to their toil. At noon it sounded for dinner, and an hour later for work again. At six o'clock it announced the evening meal and the end of the day's labor. The King rose with his subjects, for McLoughlin kept an active supervision over the various operations at headquarters. He was also for some years the only physician in Oregon, and many were the demands upon his skill, for men who had been out in the sleet and cold of the hills or in the long rains of the coast winter frequently came home with rheumatic pains and fevers.

We are inclined to think of the life in that farthest West as a barren life for a man of intellect

and culture such as McLoughlin. But that view is erroneous. McLoughlin's chief officers were men of his own stamp. He himself had studied his profession of medicine in Paris and had spent some time in Great Britain; and among his comrades in Oregon were university men from Oxford and Edinburgh. Books and conversations on serious topics, such as history and international relations, in which subjects these men were well versed, were their relaxation. The brigades from Hudson Bay and sailing ships brought the *London Times*, however late, and also volumes of history, biography, travel, and agriculture. The classics could be found on the shelves in the living room of the Big House and the modern poets were there, as well as the novels of Lord Selkirk's friend, Walter Scott. From time to time the ships brought distinguished visitors from the Old World, and sometimes such visitors came overland. A few of these were men of science, like Nuttall who had first ventured into the wilds with Lisa's brigade, and David Douglas, the Scotch botanist whose name was given to the northwestern fir tree. Globe-trotters and big game hunters of that day also came to Fort Vancouver. All guests were warmly welcomed to King McLoughlin's rude

castle for as many weeks or months as they chose to remain, and horses and servants for their personal use were assigned to them.

McLoughlin's chief interest apart from trade was agriculture. He had engaged a scientific Scotch horticulturist named Bruce, who was making experiments with both indigenous and imported plants. Bruce coaxed the wild strawberry plant to produce a large luscious berry and the wild rose to expand its blossoms. His apple trees, grown from seed, flourished. He failed, however, to persuade the Californian fig and lemon trees to endure the Oregon winters. King McLoughlin took the greatest interest in these experiments, and in the growing season hardly a day would pass without a visit to the frames and beds where Bruce was matching his science against the climate and the habits of wild plant life.

Another point of interest in the establishment was the large smithy where tools and machinery were repaired and where hatchets and axes for trade, as well as for the use of the fort's laborers, were made.

If in imagination, on a tranquil summer evening, we stand with the King of Old Oregon on the bank of the River of the West, we may read there the

prophecy of Oregon's future destiny in the world of modern commerce. From the little sawmill comes the hum of the saw and the drumlike sound of green timber planks dropping upon the wharf, for the Company's bark lying at anchor will carry a cargo of lumber to the Sandwich Islands. So we have a tiny glimpse of the beginning of the vast timber trade of the north Pacific coast. Far down, the river is black-dotted with long high-prowed cedar canoes, and the air blowing up stream brings a sound of many voices in chorus. It is a sound too shrill for melody, but the wild, piercing "oh-ah we-ah!" has in it something in keeping with the blood-hued flare across the western sky and with the drench of colored light which envelops the river and tips the somber forest with fire. The Indians are singing their Song of the Catch, as they float down to the bay to fish. In their canoes are spears with bone hooks — and some with iron hooks now, since the opening of the smithy — and nets woven of cedar and grass fibers. They will drop their weighted nets, stretching each net between two canoes, and some of the men in both canoes will hold an end of the net while the other men paddle. In this fashion they will sweep the waters and snare the salmon that

rush thickly into the river. The first fish caught will be offered in thanksgiving to the Creator of all things. After this ceremony has been performed the other salmon will be split and boned and hung up to dry in sun and smoke on racks erected along the shore and on the rafters and roofs of the houses. When winter draws near, the dried fish will be marketed to the tribes of the interior. Thus, primitively, these Indian fishers and barterers forecast the salmon trade which, in the future, shall contribute so large a part of the wealth of Oregon. The tinkle of bells as cows are driven up to the milking, the young fields of grain and vegetables, and the little spirals of smoke above the cabins announce that this is a country of yielding earth, a pleasant land for homes. These farms and cabins, planted at McLoughlin's behest, not only forecast the acres of grain fields and apple orchards, the stock ranches and the hamlets and cities of homes which constitute the Oregon of our day, but they mark the beginning of the end of Old Oregon and its King. In the coming democracy of the soil his feudal kingdom is to pass away.

As the King reënters his castle, the great bell tolls the end of a day's work. Officers, guests, clerks, brigade leaders, gather in the huge dining room.

The autumn brigades have not yet departed, so some forty men sit at the tables tonight; and there are enormous roasts to feed them.

In the group immediately about McLoughlin are James Douglas, Ogden, Tom Mackay, the Payette whose name endures in Idaho, Nuttall the botanist perhaps, or a British army officer on leave, and maybe an American trader who has fought the fur battle unsuccessfully in the mountains and has been forced to throw himself upon McLoughlin's mercy, such as Nathaniel J. Wyeth, with whose little band Nuttall crossed the Rockies. A piper stationed behind the King's chair plays while hungry men, bronzed and hardy from a life in the open, make amends to their stomachs for lean days in the desert lands and for supperless nights when they tightened their belts and lay under their blankets in the snow-choked passes. The memory of famine gives zest to the dinners at the Big House. Between courses Ogden, with twinkling eyes, cracks his jokes. Then Tom Mackay, the irrepressible story-teller whose Indian blood shows in the imagery blended with his humorously bragging recitals of the games he has played with death beyond the mountains, begins a tale with his invariable formula: "It rained, it

rained! it blew, it blew! and my God how it did snow!" And McLoughlin, pouring the one small glass of wine which he allows himself, laughs. He laughs as a King may who knows not one traitor nor poltroon in all his realm. If this is the evening of his reign, there is a glow upon it warmer than the red of sunset and kindled by a spirit stronger than wine.

As we conjure up the scene of the evening meal in the Big House, we are reminded of illustrations we have seen in books about medieval Scottish life. The huge room with its two wide stone fireplaces, its bare timbered walls and log rafters, and following the line of the walls, its long tables weighted with steaming platters where twoscore men feast by candlelight, seems to be the replica of the banquet hall in the rude castle of some Highland chieftain in the days of Bruce. Here, too, we easily distinguish the chief, for his demeanor bespeaks the man who earns his right to command by his deeds. And, when we consider the points of likeness which the clan system and the primitive code of the Scotch Highlanders bear to the tribal system and code of the red men, we can understand how it was that the Highland factors and brigade leaders of the great fur companies triumphed over their rivals and held the

friendship of the Indians. Each brigade was as a separate division of the clan under a petty chief; and all these chiefs were subject to the head of the clan. The Indians understood this system because their own confederacies were formed on much the same plan. With them, also, the chief must prove his right by his deeds — by good deeds or evil deeds, if so be that they were strong deeds. The American traders they regarded only as traders and as friends or foes, according to their mood. But the Scots were chiefs of tribes, after the fashion of Indian chiefs.

The man who sits at the center of the banquet table in the Big House, with two tall candles lighting up the platter of roast venison before him and the kilted piper standing behind his chair, is not only Chief Factor John McLoughlin, head of the white clans in the western division. He is Chief White Eagle, head of the tribes; and in the gossip, story-telling, and song which enhance the feast of venison and salmon in the red men's huge lodges this night, White Eagle's name and strong deeds, his eye and word of command, and his great stature, are the favorite themes. Honorable and mighty are the tribes who have White Eagle for their chief!

CHAPTER VIII

THE FALL OF THE FUR KINGDOM

It was in 1832 that Nathaniel J. Wyeth, of Boston, crossed the plains to give McLoughlin battle on Oregon soil. Wyeth duplicated Astor's plan of campaign. He sent out a ship with goods for trade and with provisions; and he himself at the head of a small party of men set off by land. For various causes several of his men left him on the way, and fortune did not smile with unwonted benignity on the remainder, nor on the enterprise in general. Wyeth and a few of his party reached Fort Vancouver in need. The ship was wrecked. McLoughlin received the tattered wanderers hospitably and let them have whatever they required from the stores of the Company in exchange for labor or on credit.

When Wyeth returned to Boston it was to plan another expedition. He sent out the ship *May Dacre* to meet him at the mouth of the Columbia, and he once more proceeded to cross the continent,

accompanied by a band of young New Englanders whom his accounts of El Dorado beyond the Rockies had fired with enthusiasm. This time Wyeth's ship put into port safely, and he had goods and men enough to warrant him in establishing two posts for trade. He built one post on the island in the mouth of the Willamette and erected Fort Hall, his headquarters, on the Snake. McLoughlin then sent Payette to build Fort Boise near Fort Hall in Idaho, and the Indians passed Wyeth's fort by and took their trade to the post of the Company, whose personnel and methods they knew and trusted. Nor would they come to his Willamette post. Wyeth, defeated, sold out to McLoughlin and returned to New England, where he prospered in other branches of commerce. His venture as a fur trader scarcely caused a ripple on the surface of life in Oregon, but in the East it kindled interest in the territory beyond the mountains, an interest dormant since the days of Lewis and Clark. Was Oregon a land for settlement? Men began to ask that question.

But Wyeth's excursion while it had some effect, was not the chief cause which led to settlement. To the Salish Indians — wrongly named the Flat-heads, because this tribe did not practice distortion

— belongs the honor of having awakened the East on the subject of Oregon. In 1832, the year of Wyeth's first venture in Oregon, two old men and two young warriors of the Salish journeyed from Flathead Lake in the mountains through the dangerous country of their Indian foes to St. Louis, to seek out William Clark and to request from him a Bible and a holy man to teach their tribe what was in that book. The Salish had closely observed the Hudson's Bay Company's traders in Oregon and had concluded that it was something in the trader's Bible which made the white man a man of power. From the *voyageurs* they had heard of priests who instructed the ignorant in the ways of righteousness; they had heard, too, through other tribesmen of the "Black Robes," for the tradition of these great missionaries of New France was a part of Indian lore¹; and being themselves,

¹ Of all early missionaries to the North American Indians the French Jesuits have left the most illustrious name. Members of the Order first arrived at Quebec in 1625. They came thereafter in great numbers and dwelt among the Indians everywhere as far west as the Mississippi and as far north as Hudson Bay. After the fall of New France (1760) an edict of the British conquerors forbade the Jesuits to add to their numbers in Canada, but permitted those already in the country to remain and "die where they are." The last priest of those who remained died in 1800. An American reprint of their *Relations*, edited by R. G. Thwaites, was published in seventy-three volumes (Cleveland, 1896-1901).

like most of the coast Indians, of a deeply religious temperament, they had at last resolved to send emissaries to Red Head, the Indians' friend, to state their great desire for spiritual enlightenment.

Where had these Salish seen or heard of the Bible? That question has troubled the chroniclers — who knew not the Scotch traders of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Nor'westers. But, as we have seen, many of these traders were religious, however unchristianlike the conduct of some of them might at times be. Even that Alexander Henry, who sank beneath the Columbia's waters with Astoria's old Governor when both were overweighted with rum, was what he himself would have called a God-fearing man. His journals, as well as the diaries of Cox, Ross, Thompson, Ogden, and others, reveal a profound faith in the God of salvation and in the efficacy of prayer for protection. At Fort Vancouver on the Sabbath, McLoughlin read from the Bible and prayed in the great hall that was filled with the Company's employees, red and white. The Star-Man, trading with the Salish, had read his Bible and expounded as was his custom everywhere. In camp when on the march Ogden held prayers, as his journal tells us, and read from the Bible. The

Indian brigade men attended these services as devoutly as the white men, although they understood not a word. Ogden's wife was a Salish woman, daughter or sister of a Salish chief who was his firm friend. In all probability it was Ogden's Bible which gave the Salish their great desire to possess a copy of that holy book.

The old men on the mission to St. Louis were two who had known Lewis and Clark in 1805. The young warriors went with them to protect them. They saw Clark. He received them kindly, but he was powerless to give them a missionary. Their sacred errand ended in tragedy and disappointment. The two aged men died in St. Louis and the young warriors returned to their tribe empty-handed. But the news of their pious search spread far and wide. George Catlin, the artist, was in St. Louis at the time; and, so greatly did the poetic theme of these primitive seekers of the Light stir his imagination that he wrote and talked of them incessantly. The matter soon began to be seriously discussed by the churches and at the meetings of the mission boards.

The first response came from the Methodists. When Wyeth crossed the continent for the second time, in 1834, in his train went Jason Lee and his

nephew Daniel Lee, two missionaries of that denomination. By McLoughlin's advice the Lees settled in the growing settlement on the Willamette and not in the territory of the Salish. No doubt missionaries were less needed by the Salish than in the spreading village and farming community peopled by the old *voyageurs* and laborers of the Company and also by some sixty white settlers who had straggled into Oregon from various parts. These settlers had married Indian wives and were bringing up a flock of children without religious counsel of any sort. McLoughlin had already provided them with a school-teacher named Solomon Smith, a Harvard man of Wyeth's first band, who took root in the country by marrying Celiast, daughter of the Clatsop chief, and began a family and farm of his own.

In 1835 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent out the Reverend Samuel Parker and Dr. Marcus Whitman to found missions among the Indians of Oregon. By this date steamers were plying on the Missouri River, but the steamer which bore these missionaries got the worst of an argument with snags or sand bars and so came to a halt at Liberty, Missouri. From this point the missionaries and the party

of traders under whose escort they were to proceed to Oregon took horse and pushed overland through the valley of the Platte, following that route first made by the buffalo, then appropriated by the Indians and the fur traders, and now known to history as the Oregon Trail.¹

At one of their encampments in that country of the Teton Range — lying between the headwaters of the Platte and Green rivers on the east and the headwaters of the Snake on the west, where Astor's Overlanders wandered long and helplessly, and where later Ogden's brigades clashed with the traders of St. Louis — Parker and Whitman met bands of Salish and Nez Percés. These Indians evinced so keen a desire for religious instruction that Whitman decided to turn back with an east-going brigade and bring more missionaries. Parker continued the journey over the mountains, guided by a party of the eager Salish. These Indians, says Parker — who kept a journal — “are very kind to each other, and if one meets with any disaster, the others will wait and assist him.” They had not proceeded far when they met a large

¹ Father de Smet says that the Indians called this trail, marked deep by the wagon wheels of the settlers, the “Great Medicine Road of the Whites.”

band of Nez Percés coming to greet the holy man, advancing in columns, the warriors leading and the women and children in the rear — all singing for joy, while their drummers beat out the rhythm of the march.

Although provisions were scarce and it was dangerous to delay, Parker pitched camp so that he might impart spiritual food to the several hundred primitive souls who thus sought him in the wilderness. He preached to them a number of sermons. They can have understood very little if anything of what he said, but he preached from the Bible, and so they knew that his words must be true and mighty; and they were happy. A buffalo hunt followed, and Parker was presented with a large quantity of cured meat and twenty buffalo tongues. A hundred and fifty Indians remained with him and brought him to the Hudson's Bay Company's post at the mouth of the Walla Walla. Here they left him and returned over the mountains to rejoin their hunters. The officer at the post sent Parker down the river to Fort Vancouver, where McLoughlin made him welcome.

Parker visited the site of Astoria and the tribes about the mouth of the river and saw for himself why McLoughlin had quitted Astoria and had moved

his trading headquarters sixty miles up the Columbia. He found the Chinooks besotted and degraded with liquor from the trading vessels which put into Baker's Bay from time to time. Before the founding of Astoria the Chinooks, under the stern governance of Comcomly, were sober Indians. It is even recorded that the old chief once strongly reprimanded his son-in-law, McDougal, for giving rum to Comcomly's son, causing him to return drunken to the Chinook village and to make a shameful spectacle of himself before his tribesmen. But during the reign of the Nor'westers, it seems that the Indians lived in a state of debauch, continued since then by means of liquor from the American trading vessels.

In the following spring Parker traveled through the valley of the Walla Walla, the Snake, and the Spokane rivers, noting favorable sites for missions, and late in the year (1836) he set sail from Fort Vancouver. After an absence of two years he returned to his home, at Ithaca, New York, and immediately published his *Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains*. This made another wind to fan the rising interest of easterners concerning Oregon.

The Macedonian cry from the Salish country

was not disregarded by the King of Old Oregon. If the savages themselves were petitioning for a teacher of the Scriptures, it began to appear that the white men in Oregon should also make request. McLoughlin wrote to his superiors in London asking for a chaplain to be sent to Fort Vancouver without delay. In due course a minister of the Church of England arrived, accompanied by his wife. This lady was the second white woman on the Columbia and, as chance would have it, her name also was Jane and her last initial B. The name of this couple in fact was Beaver — a circumstance which was merrily hailed as a good omen among the fur traders, since beaver was the standard coin of the fur realm. But, alas, Jane Beaver was as inappropriate in her way to wilderness life as ever Jane Barnes had been. Mrs. Beaver refused to associate in any way with the Chief Factor's wife, or with the wives of his officers; and Beaver himself publicly denounced McLoughlin and Douglas for the iniquity of marriages legalized only by the common law of the wilderness.

Douglas's wife, Nelia Connolly, the daughter of a white man, was able to understand the words that were unintelligible to the Cree wife of McLoughlin, and the scorn and condemnation of the

Englishwoman bewildered her and struck her with grief. Douglas, in temperament the opposite of his chief, cold, cutting, and doubly punctilious in anger, conveyed his impressions of the Reverend Mr. Beaver to that gentleman and insisted on the immediate performance of the marriage ceremony. Not so McLoughlin. That insulted monarch flew into a rage and drubbed the over-zealous moralist from the fort with his gold-headed cane. And, refusing to consider any rite performed by Beaver a sacred one, he would not submit to a ceremony at his hands but peremptorily ordered Douglas, lately equipped with powers as a Justice of the Peace, to unite him legally to the mother of his children.

McLoughlin, when his fury had passed, made public apology for his action with the cane, fearing that he had done what might diminish the clergyman's possible influence for good in the community. But Beaver found himself unable to accept the apology, and as soon as possible he and his lady sailed away from that jungle of iniquity — and ferocity. They had contrived, with the best intentions, to do no small harm during their brief visit. Ritualism and convention had met with the primal and the self-lawed, and the test had been too severe for both.

Misunderstanding was mutual and perfect. The Beavers, from their sheltered English parish, where conduct was ordered in advance and where no greater danger threatened them than being caught out in the rain without their galoshes, could not even guess at the nature of the feelings they had stirred and outraged in the husbands of the Indian women at Fort Vancouver. If they had known how to listen, they could have heard from those husbands tales of feminine heroism which might have enlightened them, tales of how death from some wrath of Nature or from human foe had missed its mark at the man only because of the woman's spontaneous reaction to her creed which declared her own life to be nothing outside his service. Ogden has recorded two occasions when the Salish woman saved his life and one gallant episode when she sprang to horse, pursued the party of rival traders and Indians who had seized his furs, dashed into the caravan, cut out the pack horses and stampeded them back to her husband's camp under the leveled rifles of his foes. And sixteen-year-old Nelia Connolly had leaped to the place of danger before her young husband, as hostile Indians rushed upon him in the lonely northernmost fort in New Caledonia. Such memories

as these gave fire to the fury of the King; for was it not he who had issued the ukase that, if any man dealt unfaithfully by an Indian woman, he could not remain in the service of the Company or in Oregon?

In 1836 Marcus Whitman and his bride, accompanied by Henry Spalding and his wife and W. H. Gray, a lay helper, arrived at Fort Vancouver. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding were the first white women to cross the continent to Oregon.¹ The missionaries had come by covered wagon from Fort Laramie to Fort Boisé, where Payette had put them in the charge of Tom Mackay's brigade, then about to start homewards. They were received with enthusiasm and every offer of service was made to them by white men and Indians alike, so that their passage from Boisé to Walla Walla and down the Columbia was like a triumphal procession. Word had been sent ahead to McLoughlin, and, when the Whitmans and Spaldings landed, they found the King and his court on the bank to welcome them.

On McLoughlin's advice, Whitman went to the Cayuse Indians about five miles west of Walla

¹ Ten years earlier Manuel Lisa's wife had crossed the plains with her husband to his fort at the mouth of the Big Horn.

Walla, and Spalding established himself at Lapwai on the Clearwater among the Nez Percés. While waiting for their new dwellings to be made ready for them, the two young women remained in the Big House and undertook to give instruction to McLoughlin's children.

In 1838 McLoughlin went to London to confer with his superiors. From all signs, as he read them, the Treaty of Joint Occupation would soon cease to operate. By the terms of this treaty, signed in 1818, Great Britain and the United States had agreed that the subjects of both governments should have equal rights within the territory west of the Rockies for ten years. The treaty left the question of title to this region in abeyance. Ten years later the time was extended indefinitely, with a clause providing that the agreement could be terminated by either party on twelve months' notice. A second decade had now run its course, and there was little disposition on either side to continue the agreement much longer. In the notes exchanged by the two Governments prior to 1828, the United States had expressed a willingness to consider an adjustment of the boundary at the forty-ninth parallel all the way to the Pacific. But the British Government, pointing out that this

line would cut off the southern end of Vancouver Island, would not consent and presently suggested that the line should be drawn down through the middle of the Columbia River, leaving the navigation of that stream free to both parties. This suggestion the United States rejected.

The workings of diplomacy were watched closely by the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company in England, and very probably those officials made suggestions to the British Government. At all events, they seem to have thought it likely that the Columbia would ultimately be decided upon as the boundary, for Fort Vancouver was built on the north bank of the river and the brigade leaders who ranged south of the river were instructed not to conserve the game but to follow up all the beaver streams, and, in short, to trap out this part of the country. Early during his reign at Fort Vancouver, McLoughlin became convinced that the country south of the Columbia, today the State of Oregon, would soon attract settlers, and that, whatever the diplomats might decide, the territory would belong in the end to the nation which colonized it. It was with these several thoughts in his mind that he sent the old servants of the Company into the Willamette Valley to settle. There

settlement could not interfere with the fur trade and, later, it might hold the territory for Great Britain. McLoughlin wished to see all the western country from Mexico to the Arctic Ocean under his nation's flag.

But now the Americans were coming in; and, if they settled the country, the same principle would apply in their case. So far he had been unable to induce the Company's officers in London to undertake colonization in Oregon as they had done on the Red River in Rupert's Land. Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, ridiculed the idea that Oregon would ever be a Mecca of overland migration. He thought the difficulties too great and also that Oregon was not a farming country. But the old King knew better. Therefore he went to England to declare his views in person before the directors of the Company and to plead for action.

His visit was not successful. The Company did, indeed, agree to send out a few men to farm under the grant of a new company to be formed and to be called the Puget Sound Agricultural Company; but they made light of his prognostications in general and rather let him feel that he was taking too much upon himself in giving advice.

McLoughlin reached home towards the end of 1839. Immediately he was confronted by a new problem created by the influx of missionaries and one which he could now do little toward solving. In the year before, Jason Lee had gone east for more helpers and had returned by ship bringing with him more missionaries and their families and some settlers. It had been McLoughlin's policy to advise each missionary to seek a separate field where his activities would not overlap those of any other religious teacher. Creeds were unimportant to him, as indeed they were to the other sons of the wilderness. And because it was not creeds but knowledge of God and the Commandments which mattered to man, he had, five years since, appointed Jason Lee, the Methodist, to the settlement of French-Canadian Catholics on the Willamette, for as yet no priest of their own Church had entered Oregon. There Jason Lee performed marriages and baptized children. Whitman and Spalding, McLoughlin had sent to different tribes, so that each tribe should have but one white leader of light and thus should not be confused by a divided authority. But the missionaries, some with their families, who had come on Jason Lee's ship were settling wherever the soil looked most promising

for wheat. Moreover, two Catholic missionaries, Blanchet and Demers, had arrived from the Red River and had begun their labors on the Willamette and at Fort Walla among Whitman's Cayuses. Father Pierre Jean de Smet, a Belgian Jesuit from St. Louis, came in 1840 and settled among the Salish. Other priests quickly followed and toured the Indian territory, preaching and baptizing; and there were presently in Oregon about sixty missionaries, itinerant and stationary. More settlers came and also some American traders. The latter were not attached to the American fur companies but were small peddlers; and the chief article of trade on their pack horses was liquor. When the brigade leaders came in next spring (1840) they reported to McLoughlin that the Indians were uneasy because so many people were coming in, and were already sorry for their invitation to the missionaries.

Because of later happenings, it is worth while to understand the Indian point of view. With the Indians of the North Pacific territory, who lived either on the seashore or along the larger rivers inland, water was not uncommonly used in some of their religious rites, because chiefly on the waters and by the products of the waters they lived. Therefore they took very kindly to the rite

of baptism. When Protestant and Catholic missionaries wrote in their diaries that they had baptized scores of eager Indians daily, they were not exaggerating. For when the Indians learned that near by there was a white holy man who could perform a Strong Magic with water, they traveled in droves to partake of the blessing. So far so good. But presently they were told that the baptism they had received so happily was impotent to save them. According to Indian logic that meant a bad magic, and it might harm them very much—by bringing about a fish famine, for instance. Thus did they interpret the white man's dispute of creeds; and dissensions arose among themselves as to the respective merits of the missionaries. And each year they saw more white men coming in and taking up their land, for which they were paid nothing. They began to be very suspicious as to the true purpose of the white holy man's magic. Add to these perplexed questionings the incitement of the free trader's whiskey, and we have the fundamental causes of the Cayuse War which was to break forth within a decade. Tragedy was inevitable, although most of the men and women who taught the Gospel in Oregon were devoted spirits, willing not only to live their lives among the

Indians but to *give* their lives for the creeds they taught and for the salvation of their red-skinned brothers.

McLoughlin now was between two fires — his Company's displeasure and the animus of the new settlers. Sir George Simpson came out in 1841 and, on looking over the books of the Company at Fort Vancouver, was furious because of the credit given to the Americans. McLoughlin retorted that he would not allow these men to starve. What most stirred Simpson's anger probably was the proof before his eyes, in the tents and cabins, that McLoughlin's prophecies of settlement — which he had scouted — had been true ones. On the other hand the settlers and even some of the missionaries, whom McLoughlin had received kindly and had generously helped, distrusted him. They did not understand the old King and his sway over Oregon. Two eras of civilization, historically more than a hundred years apart, were touching and clashing in Oregon — the eras of old feudalism and of modern republicanism. Those who so readily vilified McLoughlin and the Hudson's Bay Company did not know that, during these few years, only the old King's fiat held the Indians back from slaughter. They did not know that a native deputation had

waited upon McLoughlin and requested permission to wipe out the strangers who were speaking evil words against him — nor that these red-skinned deputies had been driven from Fort Vancouver in disgrace, with the threat of ostracism from the Company's trade and from all its benefits if they lifted a finger against the newcomers.

In 1843 Marcus Whitman, returning to Oregon from a visit to the East in connection with the affairs of the mission, fell in on the way with a caravan of over nine hundred settlers and guided them across the mountains. The men were accompanied by their wives and families and all their worldly goods. The Great Migration into Oregon had begun.

Winter caught the caravan in the mountains. Through snow and sleet the immigrants straggled to the bank of the Columbia. Here they built rafts to float them down. And on one of these rafts, as it shot through the Dalles under the pelting of rain, a baby was born. It was night and stormy with wind and rain when the first of the fleet neared Fort Vancouver. McLoughlin ordered his men at the fort to turn out to aid the rain-soaked pilgrims in mooring the rafts and in landing the household goods. Bales of blankets were carried down. All night the clerks over their books made entries of supplies

sent out by a small army of runners. McLoughlin ordered the women and children taken to the Big House, where his wife ministered to their needs. He remained on the shore till morning in the driving rain, directing the work of his men. His presence meant more than the settlers guessed. It was a sign to the Indians. The explanation, which he wrote to his superiors in London, of the large accounts carried on his books for the settlers and missionaries will bear recording here. It was to the effect that, if he had shut the gates of the fort and the doors of the storehouses against the immigrants, the Indians would have fallen upon them and the charge would have been made by those who were jealous of the Company's preëminence that its officials had set the natives on to murder these people.

The growth of the American population made it necessary now for the settlers to organize a provisional government, since they were unwilling to acknowledge the authority of McLoughlin and the Hudson's Bay Company. The first convention of Americans met in 1843,¹ at Champoege on

¹ As early as 1838 settlers had petitioned Congress to establish a territorial government for their protection; and on several occasions throughout 1841 and 1842 public meetings had discussed the advisability of setting up a provisional government.

the Willamette near the present Salem, Marion County, and chose three commissioners to govern them. Two years later they framed a constitution and appointed a governor. The new government was opposed by the British settlers and by Douglas. But McLoughlin supported it and contributed to its first exchequer. The missionaries living among the Indians were not in favor of it, for the deposing of McLoughlin meant that there was now no authority which the Indians would recognize. The natives were becoming more sullen and resentful daily because of the great concourse of white settlers; and there was now no check at all upon whiskey peddling.

Meanwhile the Oregon Question was convulsing Congress and a part of the nation on the eastern side of the mountains. A year before the Oregon settlers appointed their governor and subscribed to a constitution, President Polk had been swept into the White House by the slogan of "Fifty-four Forty or Fight," which meant that Great Britain must recognize as American soil the whole Pacific coast from the northern boundary of California to the southern limits of Russian Alaska — $54^{\circ} 40'$ — or else the United States would declare war. Negotiations were in progress between John C.

Calhoun, Secretary of State, and Richard Pakenham, on behalf of the British Government, when Polk declared, in his inaugural address, that "our title to the country of the Oregon is 'clear and unquestionable.'"¹ Yet, in spite of these statements and the loud response they evoked, Pakenham made two proposals to submit the question to arbitration; but both were declined by Buchanan, the new Secretary of State, who said uncompromisingly that the United States would arbitrate no question involving its territorial rights.

But by the spring of 1846 the United States was at war with Mexico. To fight Great Britain at the same time was impracticable. Though there was furious recrimination in certain quarters in England, as the echo of the bloodthirsty speeches of Congressmen and Senators sounded across the Atlantic, the British Government marked out for itself a course, described by Lord Aberdeen as "consistent with justice, reason, moderation, and common sense." On June 6, 1846, Pakenham sub-

¹ When Polk in his annual message amazed his followers by stating that he had continued the negotiations begun by Calhoun and had offered to compromise on the forty-ninth parallel, it was recalled that he had not repeated the phrase of the Democratic platform — "the *whole* of the territory of Oregon." This offer of compromise was not accepted by Great Britain and was subsequently withdrawn.

mitted to Buchanan the draft of a treaty which was signed six days later without amendment or alteration. The President sent the treaty to the Senate for consideration without his signature. This was a reversal of the usual procedure; but the overwhelming majority in favor of signing the treaty (37 to 12) in a degree at least saved Polk from the appearance of a wanton change of front.

By the terms of this treaty the boundary line between the territories of the United States and those of Great Britain was continued westward along the forty-ninth parallel to the middle of the channel which separates Vancouver Island from the mainland; thence it proceeded southerly to Juan de Fuca Strait and through the center of that strait to the ocean, thus securing the whole of Vancouver Island to England. Navigation of the channel and strait was to be free and open to both signatories; and navigation of the Columbia River was to be free to the Hudson's Bay Company and to those trading with them; and the possessory rights of the Company and of all British subjects in the territory were to be respected.

This settlement was eminently just. It gave to the United States the territory rightly claimed through Gray's discovery of the Columbia, through

Lewis and Clark's descent of the lower part of the river, and through the planting of Astoria. On these facts the American right to the Columbia Valley rested soundly. The United States had also, in 1819, acquired Spain's claim to the coast, through the treaty which ceded the Floridas and all Spanish territory on the Pacific north of California. But the Spanish title to Oregon was a shadowy one. Spanish mariners had done no more than land on the coast and declare possession; and, two hundred years before they did so, the Englishman Drake had sailed along the north Pacific coast and had taken possession of "New Albion" for his sovereign.

Great Britain's claim to the Northwest Coast — Oregon, Washington, New Caledonia, and Vancouver Island — was based on the explorations of Cook and Vancouver, on Mackenzie's overland journey to the sea, and on the explorations and establishments of the fur traders. The British right to New Caledonia (British Columbia) and Vancouver Island is easily seen to be indisputable now that the mists of controversy have evaporated. Indeed, even when the argument was raging, Calhoun advanced England's right in conversations with Polk, as Polk's diary reveals, and more

than once urged upon Polk's attention the fact that England could claim the country watered by the Fraser by the same right that the United States claimed the country watered by the Columbia, pointing out that the Hudson's Bay Company had built a score of trading posts on the Fraser and its tributaries and had begun colonization at Victoria on Vancouver Island.

The Oregon Treaty gave to both the United States and Canada a broad outlet on the Pacific, with the opportunity to expand their settlements to its shores and their commerce across its waters.

Unfortunately the lurid and acrimonious language of many Congressmen and Senators was reflected by the populace — now about ten thousand — in Oregon itself. There was discord between the Americans and the British and unreasoning animosity against the Hudson's Bay Company and its officials and servants. This unfriendly feeling began as early as 1841. Lieutenant Wilkes of the United States Navy, visiting Oregon in that year, commented on the attitude of the settlers towards the Company which had treated them with such great generosity, and expressed his surprise. There is no doubt, however, that the Company's servants, whose regard for

McLoughlin was little short of adoration, resented the intrusion of the settlers and their new government, and contributed their share of strife. Those were the blind days when jingoism ranked as patriotism, and when a man's love for his own flag was measured largely by the hatred he felt for his neighbor's. Ill-will did not prevail with all, but it did prevail with too many. It was finally to pass away in the exercise of democratic government and in blood, when the Indians rose against the white dwellers in Oregon and thus accelerated their union.

In the year of the Oregon Treaty, McLoughlin resigned from the Hudson's Bay Company and retired with his family to Oregon City. He was succeeded by Douglas at Fort Vancouver. The Indians took the departure of "White Eagle" from the Big House bitterly to heart, and they blamed the Americans for this stroke of sorrow. McLoughlin knew that as a deposed chief his power was broken; he could no longer command the natives. He sent word up the river to the Whitmans and begged them to come into the settlement, but they would not leave their post among the Cayuse Indians.

A few months later an epidemic of measles broke

out and a number of sick were being nursed at the Mission House by the Whitmans and their helpers. The disease spread among the Indians, and Whitman and Spalding had their hands full. The natives were terror-stricken. Some of them, at least, believed that the white people had purposely let loose this scourge to wipe out the Indians. No doubt they had heard of Duncan McDougal and his corked bottle of smallpox and concluded that the missionaries could have kept the bottle of measles corked if they had half tried. The epidemic seems to have been the spark which touched off the stored-up fears and resentments of the Indians. The wanton murder of numbers of their red kindred just beyond the hills by Bonneville and other American adventurers, the seizure of their lands by settlers, whose first great caravan these Indians had seen enter their country under Whitman's guidance, were other causes of their sullen discontent.

The Whitman mission was attacked. The Whitmans and twelve others in it were murdered. Some fifty persons were taken away as prisoners. The government of Oregon, powerless to effect the rescue of the captives, appealed to Douglas. Ogden with some of the men of his brigade followed

the Indians into the mountains and induced them to surrender the prisoners.

When the Indian risings began, the Hudson's Bay Company stopped the sale of firearms to the natives. But the insane prejudice abiding in the minds of some of the settlers and missionaries inspired a few of Oregon's early chroniclers to set down the cause of the uprising to the machinations of the Company.¹ Some of the farm lands belonging to the Puget Sound Agricultural Company were seized by settlers in defiance of the Treaty of 1846, and attempts were made to wrest McLoughlin's holdings from him. But the Father of Oregon had many friends as well as foes among the settlers, and these stood by him loyally.

John McLoughlin died in 1857, aged seventy-three. A few years before his retirement from office he had turned for comfort, in the storms of

¹ Not only the Company but the Roman Catholic priests were accused; and a storm of Protestant and Catholic recrimination rocked Oregon. The histories written by W. H. Gray, a Protestant layman, and Father F. N. Blanchet show how far men of zeal but of narrow sympathies may be led to forget the injunction that "he who hateth his brother is a murderer." Marcus Whitman was a Christian in his life as well as in his death. Father de Smet's devoted labors among the Salish reveal the Catholic missionary at his highest. Even those men who dipped their pens in gall had not hesitated to stake their lives in pursuit of their ideals. The Indian war would have come in any case.

censure and prejudice that broke over him, to the Canadian priests who had come into Oregon, and he died a devout Catholic. His latter years saw no change in his large spirit of tolerance and good-will towards loyalties and faiths other than his own. In soul and mind, as well as in bodily stature, McLoughlin towered high above most of the men of his day in Old Oregon. He got little gratitude in his lifetime and for years after his death, a cloud rested upon his memory. But the pages of scurrility about him have been faded white by the light of the truth, and his name and fame are today treasured as a great tradition in Oregon. He was a master builder, for he erected the moral structure of law and of just and humane principles in the wilderness; and it was under the shelter of his building that settlement began and grew in peace for a decade.

The Indian outbreaks which began in 1847 and continued for a generation compelled the American Government to provide for the security of the settlements, and, in 1848, the American domain west of the Rockies was erected into Oregon Territory. In 1853 it was divided and Washington Territory was set up. Six years later, on February 14, 1859, the State of Oregon was admitted to the Union with its present boundaries.

So passes Old Oregon. So dawns the new régime. Great changes have come to that country west of the mountains in the thirty-five years since McLoughlin went to live there! Portland, first settled in 1845, is now a chartered city and the home of Oregon's first newspaper, the *Oregonian*. There is a settlement at Seattle, named after a chief who remained friendly during the Indian wars. Victoria, on Vancouver Island, whither Douglas moved the Pacific headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849, is a thriving colony. The capital of McLoughlin's feudal kingdom, Fort Vancouver, is the county seat of the new Washington Territory.

The Hudson's Bay Company will shortly sell to the United States Government all its property on the American side of the boundary. The old Company is now no longer a feudal overlord but only a trading corporation. Its domains to the north, west of the mountains, have been surrendered to the Crown and two new colonies, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, which are presently to become one, are beginning their history. James Douglas is the Governor of both colonies. A few years more and these colonies, together with the fur trader's vast northern empire of Rupert's Land and Athabaska, east of the

mountains, shall pass into the new Dominion of Canada.

The population of Oregon and Washington has been temporarily depleted by the stampede for gold, following the discovery of mines in California in 1849, and Victoria has become a great outfitting post. Men are pouring into Victoria to buy goods. Presently begins the rush of gold seekers up the Fraser River. A new adventure beckons to the hardy, and cavalcades of Oregon men are driving northwards. The men of young Oregon, the men of the second generation, are seeking new goals in the wilderness, even as their fathers sought. They are traveling the old route of the northern brigades, up the bend of the Columbia, up the Okanogan, and down David Thompson's river to the Fraser. In their packs are not beaver traps but washing-pans, shovels, and picks. As they pass through the peaceful valley of the Thompson, they see Indians paddling up the river towards the fort to trade. They cast scarcely a glance at the bales in the canoes. The great quest today is not pelts but gold. A boundary line between two flags no longer holds asunder the spirit of British and American adventurers. But the romance of the fur trade is ended.

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INDEX

- Aberdeen, Lord, on settlement of Oregon question, 263
- Absaroka Indians, 170; *see also* Crow Indians
- Adams (frigate), 195
- Adventure (sloop), 21
- Aiken, seaman on the *Tonquin*, 130
- Alabama, Fort, French at, 77
- Alaska, Russians in, 8, 9, 16; Hudson's Bay Company's trade with, 229; coast leased by Hudson's Bay Company, 229-30; McLoughlin urges purchase of, 230
- Albatross (ship), 201
- Alexander VI, Pope, divides the world, 3-4
- American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sends Parker and Whitman to West, 245
- American Fur Company, 117, 214, 225, 226
- American Philosophical Society aids Pacific exploration, 29
- Anian, Strait of, 1, 2, 10
- Argonaut (ship), 16, 17
- Arikara Indians, Astor's Overlanders and, 158-59
- Arkansas River, French on, 77
- Ashley, General W. H., 225
- Asia, short route sought to, 2-3
- Astor, J. J., plans for fur-trading system, 110, 114, 117-19; and North-West Company, 110-12, 117, 216; and sea-otter trade, 113-14; early life, 116-17; and American Fur Company, 117, 214; scheme as to Russian trade, 118, 187-88; and Pacific Fur Company, 119; recruits men, 120; sends *Tonquin* to Oregon, 120 *et seq.*; his Overlanders journey to Oregon, 144 *et seq.*; and War of 1812, 194; petitions American government protection for Astoria, 195; tries to recover Astoria, 212; law to aid, 212-13; undaunted, 213; losses, 214; at St. Louis, 214-15; bibliography, 274
- Astoria, building of, 132-33; story of the *Tonquin* told at, 136; Indians at, 142, 200-201; Astor's Overlanders reach, 183; under the Nor'westers, 185 *et seq.*; decision to abandon, 196; Nor'westers come to, 198-200, 202; *Albatross* reaches, 201; surrendered to Nor'westers, 203; renamed Fort George, 203; restored to United States, 211; Parker at, 247; *see also* George, Fort
- Atchison (Kan.), Lewis and Clark at site of, 40
- Athabaska becomes part of Canada, 271-72
- Athabaska, Lake, Fort Chipewyan on, 94, 95

- Athabaska Pass, Thompson crosses, 134
- Baker, Mount, Vancouver names, 23
- Baker's Bay, Lewis and Clark in, 65; *Tonquin* in, 131; *Beaver* in, 187
- Bancroft, Hubert Howe, *History of the Northwest Coast*, cited, 2 (note)
- Barkley, English trader, 2 (note)
- Barnes, Jane, first white woman on the Columbia, 205-06, 249
- Barrell, Joseph, 18
- Beaver, chaplain to Fort Vancouver, 249-51
- Beaver, Jane, wife of chaplain, 249
- Beaver* (ship), 187, 188, 199, 201
- Beaver*, first steamer on Pacific coast, 230
- Beaver Club, 102, 103, 213
- Beaver Lake, Henry reaches, 88
- Bering, Vitus, 8, 12
- Big Horn Mountains, Clark maps, 68; Astor's Overlanders cross, 169, 171
- Big Horn River, Lisa on, 109
- Big Sioux River, place of peace for Indians, 44
- Bigsby, *The Shoe and Canoe*, quoted, 98
- Bird-Woman, *see* Sacajawea
- Black Hills of South Dakota, discovery of, 76; Astor's Overlanders in, 167
- Blackfeet Indians, and Lewis, 67; and Colter, 110, 150; traders and, 225
- Blanchet, F. N., Catholic missionary, 257; history of Oregon, 269 (note); bibliography, 275
- Bodega (Cal.), Russians at, 115-16
- Boisé Creek, Astor's Overlanders on, 179-80
- Boisé, Fort, 241, 252
- Bonneville, Captain B. L. E., 268
- Boone, Daniel, 37, 38, 149
- Boston, expedition to Northwest from, 16; Gray's return to, 19-20; trade from, 113
- Boston* (ship), 116
- Boston Marine Association, 19
- Brackenridge, Henry, 150, 162, 163
- Bradbury, English scientist with Hunt, 148, 154, 155-156, 157, 162; returns to St. Louis, 164
- Bright Stones, Mountains of, source of River of the West, 1, 10; Lewis and Clark reach, 59
- British Columbia, Vancouver explores, 23; British right to, 265; becomes colony, 271; *see also* New Caledonia
- Brown, Samuel, 18
- Bruce, Scotch horticulturist at Fort Vancouver, 234
- Buchanan, James, Secretary of State, 263, 264
- Buffaloes, Clark sees, 68; annual hunt of trappers, 105-107
- Bulfinch, Dr. Thomas, 18, 20
- Cabot, Sebastian, 74
- Cabots explore New World, 4
- Calhoun, J. C., Secretary of State, and Oregon question, 262-63, 265
- California, Russians plan advance into, 114; Ogden goes to, 224; revolution in, 230-231
- Callicum, Indian chief, 14
- Cameahwait (Come-and-Smoke), Shoshone chief, 59-60

- Canada, conquest of, 86; Dominion formed, 272
- Carlos III, of Spain, 7-8
- Cartier explores New World, 4
- Carver, Jonathan, publishes book on West (1778), 10-11
- Cass, hunter, leaves Lewis and Clark, 174
- Catholics, missionaries in Oregon, 257; blamed for Indian uprisings, 269 (note)
- Catlin, George, 244
- Cayuse Indians, Whitman and, 252, 267-68; War, 258
- Celiast, Solomon Smith marries, 245
- Celilo Falls, Lewis and Clark portage, 63
- Champlain, Samuel, as fur trader, 76
- Champoeg, convention at, 261-262
- Charboneau, Toussaint, guide and interpreter for Lewis and Clark, 37, 48-49, 50, 55, 56, 67, 160; remains among Mandans, 69; interpreter at Missouri Sub-Agency (1837), 72
- Charboneau, son of Sacajawea and Toussaint Charboneau, 48, 69, 161
- Charles II, of England, and Radisson and Groseilliers, 78, 79; charters Hudson's Bay Company, 79-80
- Cheyenne Indians, Astor's Overlanders and, 165
- "Children of the Sun," 193; *see also* Spokane Indians
- China, workmen brought to Vancouver Island from, 13; fur-trading expedition from, 13; *Beaver* to be dispatched to, 188; Hudson's Bay Company's trade with, 229
- Chinook Indians at Astoria, 248
- Chipewyan, Fort, 94
- Chippewa Indians, Henry and, 87-88
- Chopunnish Indians, 191, 192; *see also* Nez Percés Indians, Walla Walla Indians
- Churchill River, Fort Prince of Wales on, 84; Henry reaches, 88
- Clark, G. R., Jefferson writes to, 27-28; brother of William, 35, 36; Illinois expedition, 37; William assumes debts of, 71-72
- Clark, William, invited by Lewis to join expedition, 35-36; personal characteristics, 36, 71-72; quoted, 38; as a diarist, 42-44, 58; and Indians, 45, 71; names Judith River, 50-51, 72; explores the Missouri, 51; dangers encountered by, 53-54; and the cloud-burst, 55-56; on Cape Disappointment, 66; explores Yellowstone River, 68; offers to adopt Charboneau's son, 69; writes to brother, 69; "Red Head," 71, 243; Governor of Missouri Territory, 71; Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 71; pays brother's debts 72; marriage, 72; death (1838), 72; and Missouri Fur Company, 109; Indians seek missionaries through, 242, 244; *see also* Lewis and Clark expedition
- Clarke, John, partner in Astor's enterprise, 187; journeys inland, 188; at Spokane House, 192, 193, 196; disapproves plan of abandoning Astoria, 197; executes Indian, 197-98, 209; goes to Pend d'Oreille River, 200; accompanies Nor'westers to Astoria, 202; refuses to join Nor'westers, 205; journeys

- Clarke, John—*Continued*
back across mountains, 205,
207; and American Fur
Company, 225
- Clatsop Indians, Lewis and
Clark among, 66
- Clayoquot (Vancouver Island),
Gray at, 20, 21; *Tonquin* at,
136-41
- Clearwater River, Lewis and
Clark on, 62, 63; post on,
192-93
- Colnett, Captain of the *Argo-
naut*, 17
- Colter, John, 68, 109, 110, 150,
172
- Columbia River, importance of
discovery, 2; Gray discovers,
25; Lewis and Clark on, 63-
64; Thompson on, 98, 112;
Astor plans posts on, 110-11,
114; Russians plan settle-
ment, 114; Astor's fort, 120-
121; *see also* Astoria; Astor's
Overlanders reach, 183; *see
also* West, River of the
- Columbia (ship), 16, 19, 20,
21, 22, 24
- Columbus, Christopher, and
search for Asia, 2-3
- Colville, Fort, 223-24
- Comcomly, Indian chief, 132,
142, 187, 201, 204, 248
- Congress, law forbidding alien
traders in United States,
212-13; petition for terri-
torial government for Ore-
gon, 261 (note); Senate and
Oregon treaty, 264
- Connolly, Nelia, wife of Doug-
las, 249, 251
- Constitution* (ship), 124
- Cook, Captain James, 11-12;
and sea-otter trade, 113
- Coppermine River, Hearne dis-
covers, 89
- Cortés explores New World, 4
- Council Bluff, Lewis and Clark
name, 41
- Cox, Ross, 187, 243
- Crooked Falls, 54
- Crooks, Ramsay, partner in
Astor's enterprise, 150-51,
152; and Lisa, 156, 159; on
Snake River, 175-76, 177-
178; left with Day in moun-
tains, 179, 180, 184, 189-90;
Stuart finds, 186; journeys
overland, 188; and American
Fur Company, 225
- Crow Indians, as horse thieves,
68, 164, 191; Lisa among,
109; Astor's Overlanders and,
163, 164, 169; Rose and,
165
- Cruzatte, French *voyageur* with
Lewis and Clark, 55, 67
- Cumberland House, 88, 89
- Dalles, The, Lewis and Clark
at site of, 64
- Davidson, G. C., *The North
West Company*, cited, 90
(note)
- Day, John, hunter with Astor's
Overlanders, 152; lost with
Crooks, 179, 180, 184, 189-
190; Stuart finds, 186; starts
over mountains, 188; de-
rangement, 189-90; sent
back to Astoria, 190
- Day's Defile, 190
- Deception Bay, 15
- Demers, Catholic missionary,
257
- De Soto, Hernando, *see* Soto
- Derby, John, 18
- Dillon (Mont.), Lewis and
Clark at site of, 57
- Disappointment, Cape, Meares
names, 15; Gray at, 23, 24;
Vancouver passes, 23; Clark
at, 66; *Tonquin* at, 128, 131;
Beaver reaches, 187
- Discovery* (ship), 22
- Dorion, father of Pierre, inter-
preter with Lewis and Clark
39, 44

- Dorion, Baptiste, son of Pierre, 210
- Dorion, Pierre, interpreter with Astor's Overlanders, 147, 152, 153; and Lisa, 147-48, 159, 161; his family on the march, 148-49, 151, 152, 165, 166, 176-77, 181-82, 200; his horse, 178-79, 181; wife tells tragedy of his death, 207-09; wife remains with Walla Wallas, 209-210
- Douglas, David, botanist, 233
- Douglas, James, McLoughlin's chief lieutenant, 222-23, 237; Beaver and, 249-50; opposes new government of Oregon, 262; succeeds McLoughlin, 267; government of Oregon appeals to, 268; Governor of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 271
- Drake, Francis, 4, 5, 6, 265
- Drouillard, member of Lewis and Clark expedition, 69; and Missouri Fur Company, 109
- Dubreuil, *voyageur* with Astor's Overlanders, 179
- Dunmore's War, 37
- Dutch fur trade, 76
- England, *see* Great Britain
- Farnham, clerk at Astoria, 198
- Felice* (ship), 13, 15
- Ferrelo, Spanish seaman, 4-5
- Ferrelo, Cape, 4
- Fields, member of Lewis and Clark expedition, 44
- "Fifty-four Forty or Fight," 262
- Fisheries, Cabot's quest for, 74; beginnings in Oregon, 235-36
- Flathead Indians, 62, 241; *see also* Salish Indians
- Floridas, Jefferson attempts to purchase, 31; ceded to United States, 265
- Floyd, Charles, 37; death, 43
- Floyd, John, 37
- Floyd's Bluff, Sioux City (Ia.), 44
- Fourth-of-July Creek, 41
- Fox, mate on the *Tonquin*, 128
- France, Spain and, 17; acquires Louisiana (1800), 30-31
- Franchère, clerk with Astor's expedition, 120
- Fraser, Simon, discovers Fraser River, 100, 216-17; with North-West Company, 111, 182
- Fraser River, discovered, 100, 216-17; gold seekers on, 272
- French, English and, 9, 78; leaders in fishery industry, 75; and fur trade, 76; *coureur-de-bois*, 77-78; trading posts, 77
- Frobishers, Henry and, 88; build Cumberland House, 88; build Fort Isle à la Crosse, 88-89; and North-West Company, 91
- Fuca, Juan de, 2 (note)
- Fur trade, Cook and sea-otter skins, 12, 113; Americans and, 18; Gray and, 19-20, 24, 26; Lewis and Clark meet traders, 39; reign of the trapper, 74 *et seq.*; bibliography, 274-75; *see also* American Fur Company, Astor, Hudson's Bay Company, Missouri Fur Company, North-West Company, Pacific Fur Company
- Gallatin River, Lewis and Clark name, 56
- George, Fort, Astoria renamed, 203; Hunt returns to, 204; Astorians leave, 207; McLoughlin abandons, 219

- George, Fort, on the Nechaco River, 224
- Ghent, Treaty of (1814), 211
- Glendive, Clark at site of, 68
- Golden Hind* (ship), 6
- Good Hope, Cape of, Vancouver sails around, 22
- Grand Portage (Minn.), headquarters of North-West Company, 93, 96
- Grand River (S. D.), Astor's Overlanders near, 163
- Grantsdale (Mont.), Lewis and Clark camp near site of, 62
- Gray, Captain Robert, of Boston, 16, 18, 113; first voyage to Pacific Coast, 19-20; second voyage around the Horn, 20-21; at Clayoquot, 21; and Vancouver, 22, 23; discovers Columbia River, 23-25, 31; returns to Boston (1793), 26; death (1806), 26; quoted, 131-32
- Gray, W. H., 252; *History of Oregon*, 269 (note)
- Great Britain, explorations, 5-6; settlements, 7; English in America, 9; fur trade, 12-13, 76; and Spain, 17, 21; and France, 32; and fisheries, 74, 75 (note); English as rivals of French, 78; Oregon question, 262-67
- Great Falls, Lewis and Clark at, 52, 54, 56
- Great Lakes, French trading posts on, 77
- "Great Medicine Road of the Whites," 246 (note)
- Great Slave Lake, Thompson on, 97
- Great War, 33
- Green River, Hunt reaches, 172
- Grinder, reputed murderer of Lewis, 70
- Gros Ventre Range, Hunt crosses, 173
- Groseilliers, French explorer, 76; in England, 78, 79
- Haldemand, report to (1780), 90 (note)
- Hall, Fort, Payette builds, 241
- Hancock, John, reception for Gray, 20
- Hancock, Julia, 51
- Haswell commands *Adventure*, 21
- Hatch, Crowell, 18
- Hawaii, *Tonquin* reaches, 127, *see also* Sandwich Islands
- Hayes River, Hudson's Bay Company builds fort on, 81
- Hearne, Samuel, 89
- Heart River, Lewis and Clark pass, 46
- Heceta, Bruno, 9, 26
- Henry, Alexander, the elder, 87-88
- Henry, Alexander, the younger, 206, 243; quoted, 111 (note)
- Henry, Andrew, partner in Missouri Fur Company, 147, 156, 174 (note), 225
- Henry's Fort, 174, 176
- Henry's River, 174
- Hoback, hunter with Astor's Overlanders, 156, 164, 171, 173, 191, 207
- Hoback's River, 173
- Hudson, Henry, explores New World, 4
- Hudson Bay, Radisson and Groseilliers reach, 76; restored to England, 84
- Hudson's Bay Company, 9, 47; established, 79-80; still flourishes, 80; builds forts, 81; Indians and, 81, 226, 242; Canadian rivals, 81-82; activities after Peace of Utrecht, 84-86; and free traders, 89; rivalry of North-West Company, 92, 94, 215; servants, 93; Thompson and, 96; Red River colony, 215-

- Hudson's Bay Company—*Cont'd*
 216; absorbs North-West Company, 216; in Oregon, 217 *et seq.*; rival traders, 225-26; fleet (1839), 230; religion, 243; Parker reaches post of, 247; and settlement of Oregon, 254-55; American animosity toward, 266; and Indian uprisings, 269; sells United States property on American side, 271; Pacific headquarters moved to Victoria, 271
- Humboldt River, Ogden discovers, 225
- Hunt, W. P., leader of Astor's Overlanders, 144 *et seq.*; on the *Beaver*, 187-88, 199; on the *Albatross*, 201-02; returns to Astoria, 204, 205; in St. Louis, 205 (note)
- Iberville, Pierre Le Moyne d', 82, 83-84
- Idaho, Ogden in, 225
- Independence Creek, 41
- Illinois River, French on, 77
- India, fur-trading expeditions from, 13
- Indians, reception of Meares, 14-15; Gray and, 20, 21, 24; Lewis and Clark and, 44-45, 63; fur trade with, 75-76; Hudson's Bay Company and, 81, 226, 242; and free traders, 89; hostile to Winship, 115; massacre at Nootka, 116; and Astoria, 132, 141-42; Thorn and, 136-38; attack return expedition of Astor's men, 186; and fur traders, 225-27; and missionaries, 257-58; and Oregon government, 262; uprisings in Oregon, 268-269, 270; *see also* names of tribes
- Iphigenia* (ship), 16
- Irving, Washington, *Astoria*, 131, 167, 203
- Isaac Todd* (ship), 194, 195, 199, 201, 202, 205
- Isle à la Crosse, Fort, 88-89
- James, Duke of York, and Hudson's Bay Company, 80
- James Bay, Hudson's Bay Company builds fort on, 81, 82
- Jefferson, Thomas, and expansion, 27-28; Lewis and, 29, 34, 47, 48, 69; President of United States, 31; private message to Congress, 31-32; *Memoir* quoted, 34-35
- Jefferson River, Lewis and Clark on, 56, 57
- Jesuits as missionaries to Indians, 242 (note)
- John Day's River, 190
- Joint Occupation Treaty (1818), 212, 253
- Joliet, Louis, 76
- Jones, Ben, hunter, 185
- Juan de Fuca, Strait of, Gray in, 22; Indians from, 141
- Judith's River, Clark names, 50-51, 72
- Kamchatka, Ledyard starts for, 28
- Kamloops (B. C.), post established on site of, 192
- Kansas River, Lewis and Clark reach, 39; French on, 77
- Kaskaskia, French in, 77
- Kaw (or Kansas) Indians, Lewis and Clark and, 39-40
- Kendrick, Captain John, 16, 18, 19, 20-21, 26
- Kentucky, Spain and, 30
- Kootenay Indians, Astorians trade with, 193
- La Charette, 72; Lewis and Clark reach, 38; Hunt at, 149

- Lady Washington* (sloop), 16, 19, 20, 26
 Langley, Fort, 224
 La Perouse, Admiral, 84 (note)
 Laramie, Fort, 252
Lark (ship), 195, 199, 201, 214
 La Salle, René-Robert Cav-
 lier, Sieur de, 4, 76
 La Vérendrye, 47, 76
 Le Clerc, *voyageur* with Astor's
 Overlanders, 188, 200, 208
 Ledyard, John, 28-29
 Lee, Daniel, 245
 Lee, Jason, 244, 256
 Lemhi Pass, Lewis and Clark
 go through, 62
 Lemhi River, Lewis and Clark
 explore, 62
 Le Moynes with marauders to
 Hudson Bay, 82; *see also*
 Iberville
 Lewis, clerk on the *Tonquin*,
 133, 139
 Lewis, Meriwether, 29-30;
 chosen by Jefferson for ex-
 pedition, 34; Jefferson on,
 34-35; prepares for expedi-
 tion, 35; *A Statistical View*
of the Indian Nations In-
habiting the Territory of
Louisiana, 40; and Indians,
 40, 41, 66; as a diarist, 42;
 writes to Jefferson, 47, 48,
 69; encounters with bears,
 49-50, 52-53; explores
 Maria's River, 51; and
 Great Falls, 52; quoted, 61;
 shot accidentally, 67; Gover-
 nor of Louisiana Territory,
 69; death (1809), 70; *see also*
 Lewis and Clark expedition
 Lewis and Clark expedition,
 27 *et seq.*; personnel, 36-37;
 diary of, 42-43; loyalty of
 men, 153-54; bibliography,
 273-74
 Lewis and Clark River, 66
 Liberté, deserter from Lewis
 and Clark expedition, 41
 Lisa, Manuel, fur trader, 109;
 Missouri Fur Company, 109;
 and Astor's Overlanders, 146,
 156, 159, 160, 161-62, 163,
 164; Dorion and, 147-48,
 161; Henry and, 174 (note);
 death, 225; wife crosses
 plains, 252 (note)
 Lo Lo Creek, Lewis and Clark
 on, 62, 66
 Lo Lo Pass, Lewis and Clark
 in, 62, 66
 Louisiana, Spain acquires
 (1763), 9; ceded to France
 (1800), 30-31; Iberville and,
 82
 Louisiana Purchase, 32-34
 Lumbering, beginnings in Ore-
 gon, 235
 McDonald, John, of Garth,
 99, 204
 McDougal, Duncan, joins
 Astor, 120; to command fort
 on Columbia, 121; loyalty to
 Nor'westers, 124-25, 195;
 selects site for fort, 132; and
 Thompson, 134-35; frightens
 Indians with the "bottle of
 smallpox," 142, 268; marries
 daughter of Comcomly, 143,
 200-01; honors Hunt's arriv-
 al at Astoria, 184; welcomes
 the *Beaver*, 187; learns Nor'-
 westers' plans, 196; decides
 to abandon Astoria, 196;
 plan falls through, 197; and
 McTavish, 198-99, 202, 207;
 sells goods and post to Mc-
 Tavish, 199; meets the *Alba-*
tross, 201; surrenders As-
 toria to Nor'westers, 203;
 opinions of his conduct, 204;
 becomes Chief Factor for
 Nor'westers, 204; Astor and,
 212; loss to, 214; Comcomly
 reprimands, 248
 MacKay, Alexander, joins As-
 tor, 120; and Thorn, 123;

- MacKay, Alexander—*Continued*
 landing from the *Tonquin*, 129; sails on *Tonquin*, 133, 137, 138; death, 139; McLoughlin marries widow of, 218
- Mackay, Tom, 224, 237, 252
- Mackenzie, Alexander, partner in North-West Company, 94, 182; discovers and explores Mackenzie River, 95, 216; journal, 100
- Mackenzie, Donald, partner in Pacific Fur Company, 144-45, 152; recruits rivermen in Montreal, 144-45; on journey overland, 175, 183; leads expedition to erect forts, 188; and the Nor'-westers, 196, 202; traps Snake River Country, 200; returns across mountains, 205, 207
- Mackenzie River discovered and explored, 95, 216
- Mackinaws, 90, 93, 94, 111, 118
- McLellan, Robert, partner with Astor's Overlanders, 152; and Lisa, 156, 159, 162, 163; on journey overland, 175, 183; makes start for return journey, 185, 188; welcomes the *Beaver* to Astoria, 187
- McLoughlin, John, Father of Oregon or King of Old Oregon, 217; member of North-West Company, 217-218; with Hudson's Bay Company, 218; "White Eagle," 218; prohibits rum, 226; policies, 227; life at Fort Vancouver, 228-29, 231-39; his wife, 228-29; urges purchase of Alaska, 230; character, 231; as a physician, 232-33; hospitality, 233-34; interest in agriculture, 234; welcomes Parker, 247; sends to England for clergyman, 249-51; and Whitman, 252; goes to London, 253; sends settlers to Willamette Valley, 254-55; and missionaries, 256; attitude toward American settlers, 259, 260, 261, 262; resigns from Hudson's Bay Company, 267; death (1857), 269-70
- McTavish, Donald, 99, 205-06
- McTavish, J. G., of the North-West Company, 196; comes to Astoria, 198-200, 202-203; Astoria surrendered to, 203, 207
- McTavish, Simon, 91
- Madison River, Lewis and Clark name, 56
- Magellan explores New World, 4
- Mandan, Fort, 48
- Mandan Indians, Lewis and Clark among, 46-47, 68-69
- Maquinna (or Maquilla), Indian chief, 13, 14
- Maria's River (Marias), Lewis explores, 51, 67
- Marquette, Jacques, Jesuit priest, 76
- Martinez, Don Estevan, 16, 19
- May Dacre* (ship), 240
- Meares, John, 13-15, 16, 17, 19, 113
- Methodist Church sends missionaries to Indians, 244-45
- Mexico, war with, 263
- Michaux, André, 29-30
- Michilimackinac, Hunt seeks to enlist men at, 145; Astor's losses at, 212
- Michilimackinac Company, 90
- Michilimackinac, Fort, 87
- Miller, Joseph, partner with Astor's Overlanders, 152, 158; leaves party, 174; Stuart finds, 191-92

- Mississippi River, Spain concedes right of navigation, 30; Lewis and Clark cross, 38; French on, 76, 77; Thompson traces headwaters of, 97; Hunt takes party down, 146
- Missouri Fur Company, 109, 146, 147, 225
- Missouri River, Lewis and Clark on, 38 *et seq.*; doubt as to course, 51
- Montreal, and fur trade, 90; Nor'westers in, 102-04; Astor at, 213, 216
- Moose, Fort, Canadians reach, 82, 83
- Napoleon, plans expedition to New Orleans, 31; sells Louisiana, 32-33
- Nass River, Fort Simpson on 229
- Natchez Trace, Lewis killed on, 70
- Nelson River, Hudson's Bay Company builds fort on, 81
- Nevada, Ogden in, 225
- New Albion, 6, 265
- New Archangel (Sitka), Hunt bound for, 188
- New Caledonia, Hudson's Bay Company's posts in, 224; British right to, 265; *see also* British Columbia
- New Orleans, Napoleon and, 31; Jefferson attempts to purchase, 31; French in, 77
- New Zealand, Vancouver touches, 22
- Nez Percés Indians, Lewis and Clark and, 62; Astor's men trade with, 192; Clarke and Farnham execute one of, 198; kill Dorion and companions, 208; Parker and Whitman meet, 246, 247; Spalding among, 253
- Nodaway River, Hunt camps near mouth of, 146, 151
- Nootka (Vancouver Island), Cook at, 11; Meares's colony, 13-16; Martinez seizes, 16, 17; restored to England, 17; Vancouver at, 22; Ledyard plans to go to, 28; *Boston* seized at (1803), 116
- Northwest America* (ship), 15, 16
- North-West Company, Mandans and, 47; established, 91; strife among, 91; personnel, 92; employ *coureurs-de-bois*, 92-93; headquarters, 93; and Hudson's Bay Company, 94, 215, 216; achievements, 94 *et seq.*; life in Montreal, 102-04; life at Fort William, 104-08; Astor and, 110-12, 118, 214; Astoria under, 185 *et seq.*; end of, 216
- Norway House, 224
- Nuttall, English scientist with Astor's Overlanders, 148, 154, 158; returns to St. Louis, 164; at Fort Vancouver, 233; crosses Rockies with Wyeth, 237
- Oak Point, Winship names, 115
- Ogden, P.S., with McLoughlin, 223, 224, 237; and St. Louis traders, 226; religion, 243; Indian wife, 251; induces Indians to surrender missionaries, 268-69
- Ohio River, French dominate, 77
- Okanogan River, Stuart establishes post at mouth of, 135, 185, 186, 192, 196, 200, 224
- Ordway, Sergt., of Lewis and Clark expedition, 67
- Oregon, myth connected with, 1-3; early explorations, 4-10; Carver and, 10-11; origin of name, 11; Cook in, 11-12; Meares in, 13-15; Robert

- Oregon, myth, etc.—*Continued*
 Gray in, 16, 18–21, 23–26;
 Vancouver in, 21–23; Lewis
 and Clark expedition, 27
et seq.; Thompson in, 98,
 102, 133–34, 217; Nor'-
 westerns in, 111–12, 185 *et*
seq.; Astor and, 113 *et seq.*;
 question of ownership, 211–
 212, 253–54, 262; McLough-
 lin in, 217 *et seq.*; Hudson's
 Bay Company in, 217 *et seq.*;
 settlement of, 221–22, 241
et seq.; McLoughlin urges
 colonization of, 254–55;
 Great Migration to, 260;
 boundary defined, 264; Span-
 ish title, 265; Treaty, 266;
 erected into Territory (1848),
 270; admitted as State
 (1859), 270; effect of dis-
 covery of gold in California
 on, 272; bibliography, 273–
 276
- Oregon City, beginnings of, 221;
 McLoughlin retires to, 267
- Oregon River, Carver's ac-
 count of, 10
- Oregon Trail, 246
- Oregonian*, Oregon's first news-
 paper, 271
- Osage, Fort, Astor's Over-
 landers at, 150
- Osage Indians, Astor's Over-
 landers among, 150–51
- Osage River, French on, 77
- Pacific Fur Company, 119,
 145, 174, 214
- Pakenham, Richard, and Ore-
 gon Treaty, 263
- Parker, Samuel, missionary,
 245, 246, 247; *Journal of an*
Exploring Tour Beyond the
Rocky Mountains, 248
- Payette, of the Hudson's Bay
 Company, 237, 241, 252
- Pelican* (French man-of-war),
 84
- Pend d'Oreille River, Astorians
 on, 193, 196, 200
- Perez, Juan, 8, 9
- Piegan Indians, Thompson and,
 101, 134
- Pintard, John, 18
- Platte River, Stuart's party
 winters on, 191
- Point Ellice (Point Distress),
 65
- Point George, 132
- Polk, J. K., and Oregon ques-
 tion, 262, 263, 265–66
- Pompey's Pillar, 68
- Pond, Peter, 88, 91
- Pontiac's War, 86, 88
- Portland (Ore.), settled (1845),
 271
- Portland Channel, Gray at, 20
- Portugal, maritime nation, 3;
 and fisheries, 74, 75 (note)
- Prince of Wales, Fort, 84
- Princess Royal* (ship), 16
- Princessa* (ship), 16
- Pryor, Sergt., of Lewis and
 Clark expedition, 67
- Puget Sound, Vancouver dis-
 covers, 23
- Puget Sound Agricultural
 Company, 255, 269
- Quadra, Don, Spanish Com-
 missioner, 23
- Queen Charlotte Island, Ken-
 drick slain at, 21
- Quinett Creek, Lewis and
 Clark on, 64
- Raccoon* (ship), 194, 199, 201,
 203
- Radisson, French explorer, 76;
 in England, 78, 79
- Rae, Glen, son-in-law of Mc-
 Loughlin, 230–31
- Red River, French on, 77;
 Selkirk attempts colony on,
 215–16, 255
- Reed, member of Lewis and
 Clark expedition, 41–42

- Reed, John, clerk with Astor's Overlanders, 152, 175, 183, 185, 186, 196, 200, 207
- Revolutionary War, 10
- Rezner, hunter with Astor's Overlanders, 156-57, 164, 171, 174, 191, 207, 208
- Robinson, hunter with Astor's Overlanders, 156-57, 164, 171, 174, 191, 207
- Rocky Mountain Traders, 225, 226
- Rocky Mountains, Mackenzie penetrates, 95; Thompson crosses, 97-98
- Rose, Edward, interpreter with Astor's Overlanders, 165-66, 169
- Ross, leader among free traders, killed by Nor'wester, 91
- Ross, Alexander, clerk with Astor's expedition, 120, 192, 243
- Rupert, Prince, 79, 80
- Rupert's Land, Hudson's Bay Company granted, 80-81; free traders in, 88; North-West Company and, 93; Hudson's Bay Company in, 227, 255; becomes part of Canada, 271
- Russian Fur Company, 229
- Russians, fur hunters at Kamchatka, 8; in Alaska, 8, 9, 16; initiate sea-otter trade, 113; plan for settlement on Columbia, 114; erect post in California, 115-16
- Sacajawea, the Bird-Woman, with Lewis and Clark expedition, 37, 48, 49, 50, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59-60, 61, 67-68, 69, 72; with Lisa's party on way to Shoshones, 160
- St. James, Fort, on Stuart Lake, 223
- St. Louis, fur trade, 39, 72-73, 108; Lewis sends bateau to, 48; Lewis and Clark return to, 69; Astor plans forts from, 119; Hunt at, 146-47, 205 (note); Bradbury and Nuttall return to, 164; Astor's men start for, 185, 207; Stuart's party reaches, 191; Astorians plan to set out for, 196; Astor in, 214, 215; Salish Indians seek Clark in, 242, 244
- Salish Indians, Lewis and Clark among, 62; Thompson among, 136; Astorians trade with, 193; request for missionaries, 241-44; Whitman and, 246; Father de Smet as missionary to, 257
- Salmon River, Clark explores, 62
- San Blas (Mexico), expedition to Northwest from, 16
- Sandwich Islands, Cook at, 12; Vancouver touches, 22; Hunt in, 199, 202; Hunt charts *Albatross* in, 201
- San Francisco, Hudson's Bay Company has post at, 229
- Saskatchewan River, discovered, 76; French trading posts on, 77
- Scotch, as fur traders, 87; and North-West Company, 92
- Scott, Charles, 36
- Selkirk, Lord, 215, 216
- Seton, clerk at Astoria, 196
- Seven Years' War, 86
- Shoshone Indians, Lewis and Clark among, 57-61; Astor's Overlanders and, 171, 177, 179, 181-82; rifle caches of Astorians, 192; rob white traders, 225
- Siberia, Ledyard plans to traverse, 28
- Simpson, Sir George, 255, 259
- Simpson, Fort, 229, 230
- Sioux Indians, and Lewis and Clark, 44-45; Astor's Over-

- Sioux Indians—*Continued*
 landers encounter, 153, 155, 157
- Smet, Father P. J. de, cited, 246 (note); Jesuit missionary, 257, 269 (note)
- Smith, Solomon, 245
- Snake Indians, 57; *see also* Shoshone Indians
- Snake River, Lewis and Clark on, 63; Astor's Overlanders seek, 171; Astor's Overlanders on, 173-80; Astorians trap country of, 200; Fort Hall on, 241
- Society Islands, Vancouver touches, 22
- Soto, Hernando de, explores New World, 4
- Southwest Company, 214
- Spain, explorations, 3-4, 4-5, 8-9, 16; defeat of Armada, 6-7; claims in America, 7; acquires Louisiana (1763), 9; secretiveness, 10; England and, 12, 17, 21; concedes right of navigation on Mississippi, 30; and France, 34; and fisheries, 74, 75 (note); treaty with (1819), 265
- Spalding, Henry, missionary, 252, 253, 256, 268
- Sparrowhawks, 170; *see also* Crow Indians
- Spokane House, 192, 193, 196
- Spokane Indians, Astorians trade with, 193
- Spokane River, Thompson builds fort on, 133, 134; Astorians on, 196; post sold to Nor'westers, 199
- Stuart, David, of Labrador, joins Astor's company, 120; and Thorn, 123; landing from the *Tonquin*, 129; greets Thompson, 134, 135; builds fort on Okanogan, 135-36; establishes post at Kamloops, 192; and plan to abandon Astoria, 197, 199; at Okanogan, 200; refuses to join Nor'westers, 205; sets out to cross mountains, 205, 207
- Stuart, Robert, nephew of David, joins Astor's company, 120; greets Thompson, 134, 135; leads expedition to Okanogan, 185, 186; leads party overland from Oregon, 188-92; and American Fur Company, 225
- Stuart Lake, Fort St. James on, 223, 224
- Stuart's Fort, 192; *see also* Okanogan
- Tennessee, Spain and, 30; erects monument to Lewis, 70
- Thompson, David, of the North-West Company, 96, 182; explorations, 96-98, 217; personal characteristics, 98-100, 243; journal, 100; the Star-Man, 100-01; map of fur country, 104-05; sent to Oregon, 111-12; builds fort on Spokane, 133, 134, 193; and McDougal, 134-35; returns to Montreal, 136
- Thompson River, Astorians on, 193
- Thorn, Captain Jonathan, of the *Tonquin*, 121-33, 135, 144, 195; fate, 136-39
- Three Forks, Lewis and Clark at, 68; trading post of Missouri Fur Company, 109, 147, 156
- Three Tetons, Colter discovers, 68
- Thwaites, R. G., ed., *Jesuit Relations*, 242 (note)
- Tonquin* (ship), 112, 185, 195; voyage to Oregon, 113 *et seq.*; fate of, 136-41, 214
- Trappers, reign of, 74 *et seq.*
- Travelers Rest, 62, 66

- Tyrrell, J. B., on Thompson, 97 (note)
- Umatilla River, Astor's Overlanders on, 183
- Utrecht, Treaty of (1713), 84
- Vancouver, George, 21-23
- Vancouver, Fort, description of, 219-20; brigades from, 223, 224; life at, 231-39; Wyeth reaches, 240; Parker at, 247, 248; request for chaplain for, 249; situation, 254; Simpson at, 259; settlers arrive at, 260; Douglas succeeds McLoughlin at, 267; county seat of Washington Territory, 271
- Vancouver Island, Vancouver circumnavigates, 23; British right to, 265; Pacific headquarters of Hudson's Bay Company, 271
- Van Dieman's Land, Vancouver at, 22
- Victoria, British colonization, 266; headquarters for Hudson's Bay Company, 271; traders in, 272
- Wabash River, French on, 77
- Walla Walla Indians, 191, 197, 209
- Washington, George, 86
- Washington Territory (1853), 270, 271, 272
- Wayne, "Mad Anthony," Clark under, 36; Miller serves under, 152
- Weekes, seaman on the *Tonquin*, 130
- West, River of the, myth concerning, 1; Heceta's account, 9-10; Carver's account, 10; Meares searches for, 15; Gray and, 21, 25, 31; Gray names it the Columbia, 25; Lewis and Clark and, 59, 63; *see also* Columbia River
- Whitman, Marcus, missionary, 269 (note); sent to Oregon, 245; returns for more missionaries, 246; journeys with wife to Oregon, 252; among Cayuse Indians, 252, 256; guides caravan across mountains, 260; McLoughlin invites to Oregon City, 267; measles epidemic, 268; murdered, 268
- Wilkes, Lieutenant, of United States Navy, cited, 266
- Willamette River, Astorians on, 193, 200; changes in name, 193 (note); Fort Vancouver north of, 219; Wyeth builds post on island, 241
- William, Fort (Ontario), headquarters of North-West Company, 93, 119, 194, 200, 216; life at, 104-08; McLoughlin goes to, 217-18
- Wind River, Astor's Overlanders on, 171
- Winnipeg, Lake, French on, 77; Henry on, 88; Norway House, 224
- Winship, Boston trader, 114-15
- Wisconsin River, French on, 77
- Wishram, trouble with Indians of, 186
- Wood, Maria, 51
- Wood River, Lewis and Clark winter at mouth of, 38, 50
- Woods, Lake of the, French on, 77
- Wyeth, N.J., 237, 240, 241, 244
- Wyoming, Colter explores mountains of, 68
- Yellowstone Park, Colter discovers, 68
- Yellowstone River, Lewis and Clark name, 49; Clark explores, 68
- York, Clark's servant, 37, 67

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